THE

THEOLOGICAL WORKS

OF THE

HONOURABLE

Robert Boyle, Esq;

EPITOMIZ'D.

VOL. III.

By *RICHARD BOULTON*, late of *Brazen-Nose College* in *Oxford*.

LONDON,

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MDCCXV.

WORKS

TO THE

Right Honourable

RICHARD

LORD VISCOUNT

SHANNON.

May it pleaſe Your LORDSHIP,

LEarning and Piety carry ſo much Intrinſick Merit along with them, that they ſeldom fail of gaining the Eſteem and Protection, of thoſe who are endowed with thoſe Qualifications themſelves; and thoſe who are leſs ſollicitous, to enable themſelves with thoſe Excellent En-

dowments, cannot forbear admiring them in others; but Your *Lordſhip*, being ſignally diſtinguiſhed by the brighteſt Character, that Wiſdom and Knowledg can add to that of Nobility, which lineally deſcend from Your *Lordſhip's* Glorious Origin, and ſhine through every Branch of Your Illuſtrious Family: I have the greater Reaſon to hope, that the following Sheets will not be unacceptable to Your *Lordſhip*, nor want Your *Lordſhip's* Encouragement and Protection.

The Name of *Boyle* ſhines through the greateſt Titles of Honour, and adds a Luſtre to that of *Shannon*; and though the Honourable Author, whoſe Works I Preſume to lay before Your *Lordſhip* in Abſtract, had no Titles of Honour to make Acceſſion to thoſe of Univerſal Learning and Knowledg, yet the vaſt Endowments of his Mind, and the large Improvements he made, will always ſecure him

him Honour, which cannot be diminiſhed by Envy or Detraction, or by Length of Time; ſince the Name of *Boyle*, will always be mentioned with the greateſt Eſteem and Reſpect, which the greateſt Merit may juſtly challenge.

His Wiſdom and Knowledg did not only extend to, nay ſurpaſs, what is commonly eſteemed, as they make Men the wiſer in this World; but he likewiſe improved and cultivated that Knowledg and Wiſdom which reſpect a future State and eternal Happineſs; which far exceeds the Wiſdom of this World.

King *Solomon* was more eſteemed for his Wiſdom and Knowledg, than for his Crown; and the Fame of his Emperial Kingdom, added not ſo much to his Honour, as the former. Thus the Name of

Boyle, hath always been distinguished by those excellent Qualifications, that must perpetuate the Glory of Your Noble Family, and will carry along with it, a greater and more lasting Title of Honour, than that of *Lord Viscount Shannon*.

Wisdom and Knowledg are great Ornaments, when added to those of Vertue and Piety; and good Principles, joyned with great Capacities, render those that are dignifyed with Titles of Honour, still more Honourable.

These Qualities are not only eminent in Your *Lordship*, but Loyalty, and Your *Lordship's* sincere Affections towards the Government, which were always Exemplary in Your *Lordship's* Family, render Your *Lordship* serviceable to Your Country in a double Capacity, being both an Exem-

Exemplary Pattern of Goodneſs, and capable of contributing to the Publick Good, in a larger Sphere.

But ſince all that I can ſay, would rather diminiſh, than add to Your *Lordſhip's* Character, and thoſe that are better Judges, can better diſcern Your *Lordſhip's* Abilities, I ſhall not pretend to draw a Character, which can only be repreſented by the worthy Original; nor ſhall I repreſent that Imperfectly, which no Encomiums can add to, from ſo mean a Hand as mine.

Since then, my principal Aim is, to lay the following Sheets under Your *Lordſhip's* Protection and Patronage; if Your *Lordſhip* pleaſes to admit them Your Candid Reception, it will not be a little Satisfaction to me, that I have the Honour

of

of conveighing them to Your *Lordſhip's* Hands, and of profeſſing my ſelf Publickly,

My LORD,

Your LORDSHIP's

Moſt Humble and

Obedient Servant,

RICHARD BOULTON.

THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

HAving in the Preface to the firſt Volume given the Reader an Account of the Subjects contained in that, and added the Reaſons why we divided the Whole into diſtinct Books and Parts, we ſhall in this proceed to give a brief Account of what the Reader may expect to find in this Second Volume.

And as in that we firſt begun with the Chriſtian Virtuoſo, to ſhew, that a Philoſopher might alſo be a good Chriſtian; and proceeded to ſuch Subjects as might ſtrengthen the fundamental Articles of our Belief, and demonſtrate the Exiſtence of a God, and Divine Providence; So in this Volume the Subjects treated on, having a more immediate Relation to Religion, and thoſe things which confirm us in the reſt of our Chriſtian Faith and Vertues; to invite thoſe, who have taken Pains to Cultivate Philoſophy, to the Study of Divini-

vinity, we have begun with what the Author hath ſaid to ſhew the Excellency of the Study of Divinity above that of Natural Philoſophy; in which he repreſents the ſeveral Inducements, that may recommend the Study of Divine Truths; as the Excellency and Sublimity of the Subject, which gives us Reaſon to acknowledg a Deity, conſidering the Nobleneſs and Nature of his Attributes; and the more we are acquainted with his Divine Perfections, to venerate and adore him. And as a further Encouragement to the Study of Divinity, he ſhews us, that though the Light of Nature may direct us to the Knowledg of God; yet ſince God muſt know himſelf better than Man can know him, Revelation will aſſiſt Nature to diſcover his Excellences more plainly, to which we are obliged for the Knowledg of his Will and Poſitive Laws. And tho' Divinity teaches us the Nature & Will of God; yet the Scripture only tells us, what Judgment he makes of Men's Lives and Deportment; and the Conditions of his Covenant, upon which the Apprehenſions and Conſolation of Eternal Happineſs or Miſery depend. And as Divinity thus Diſcovers the Excellences and Prerogatives of a Deity; So it affords us Diſcoveries of his Infinite Perfections and Prerogatives; as alſo, of Angels and our own Souls; which Objects are much more Noble and Important than any in Natural Philoſophy.

ſophy. He further ſhews us, that the Knowledg of Natural Things is in a great Meaſure owing to Theology, eſpecially thoſe of the moſt Importance; as the Time, Manner and Order of the Creation, and the Origin of the firſt Man; as alſo of the State of Man after Death. He further ſhews us, that as the Soul is diſtinct from the Body, ſo it hath a different Origin from the Souls of other Creatures; and that after Death it is to paſs into a State, where Death hath no Power. He likewiſe ſhews us, how far Reaſon may determine the Immortality of the Soul and a Future State, and that the Redemption of Man is only to be known by Divine Revelation, which teaches things beyond the reach of Reaſon. He further ſhews us, how much more Theology may be uſeful than hath hitherto been obſerved, ſince God hath not limited the Works of his Power, Wiſdom and Goodneſs, to the conſideration of our Reaſon only, but hath made four general Communities of Creatures the Objects of it; as things meerly Corporeal; Intellectual Beings united with Organized Bodies; as alſo Good and Evil Angels. He likewiſe ſhews us, that the Government of the World is more Noble than it's Formation, the later being performed by a few Words, whereas the former was not carried on without Laws, Commands, Revelations, Miracles, Promiſes, Threats,

Exhortations, Mercies and Judgments. He further makes it appear, how Men's want of enquiring into God's Diſpenſations is Diſadvantagious to the Diſcovery of his Attributes, which would both promote God's Glory, and our own Satisfaction.

Having conſidered the Nobleneſs of the Subjects of Theology, he proceeds to ſhew us, how far Obedience to the Will and Command of God, as well as Gratitude for the Benefits and Advantages we receive from him, may oblige us to purſue the Study of Divinity; and that Alilities and Capacities of Mind are not only requiſite to the Acquiſition of Knowledg, but Objects alſo, ſince the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament ſhew his Handy Works. *And to encourage us further to the Study of Divinity, he propoſes ſeveral Advantages, which may excite us to the Purſuit of it; as the Nobleneſs of the Objects which make it delightful, and that which adds further to our Satisfaction is, the Senſe of Performing our Duty. And further, as the Study of Divinity tends to the Improvement of Piety and Vertue; ſo it likewiſe affords us Comfort in the time of Affliction; and as the Study of Philoſophy only amuſes the Mind, & diverts other Thoughts which might be evil, the Study of Divinity, as an Act or Exerciſe of Reaſon, being employed out of Obedience, Gratitude,*

tude and Love to God, is not only acceptable to him, but a means to obtain his Favour, which is the higheſt Satisfaction we can aim at. To which Advantages of the Study of Divinity, he adds, that of Eternal Felicity; and tho we fall ſhort of the Attainments, our Endeavours after the Knowledg of Divine Truths and the Performance are ſufficient to gain the Reward.

And to repreſent further the Excellences of the Study of Divinity, he ſhews, why there is no Compariſon betwixt that and the Study of Philoſophy; and as he conſiders the Advantages of Natural Philoſophy, he makes it Apparent that the Study of Divinity improves Philoſophy; and that Divine Advantages excel thoſe of a Naturaliſt, both in Nobleneſs and Duration. He further ſhews, whether Phyſical or Divine Truths have more clearneſs and certainty, and that though the clearneſs of Phyſical Truths, adds to the Delightfulneſs of that Study, yet the Fundamental and Neceſſary Articles of Religion are both Evident and Capable of a Moral Demonſtration; whereas Phyſical Demonſtrations have but a Moral Certainty; and though we cannot but know, what is evident to our Senſes, yet we know but little of the Nature of Body, whether with, or without, the Teſtimony of our Senſes, which Imperfections of our Knowledg are occaſioned by the weakneſs of our Capacities.

He further repreſents other Conſiderations which may recommend the Knowledg of Natural Philoſophy, and that the Study of Phyſicks may recommend themſelves to a Divine, ſince the Contemplation of the Works of Nature, qualify him the better to Admire and Praiſe the Author of them; and that being too proud only of the Attainments in Natural Philoſophy can occaſion a ſlight of the Study of Divinity; and that it is a further recommendation to the Study of Divinity, that God Almighty promotes the Study of it. And ſince Reputation is frequently what induces Men to purſue a Study, he further ſhews, that the Reputation got by the Study of Philoſophy is more eaſily loſt and leſs permanent than that which is acquired by the Study of Divinity. And as the Reputation of Philoſophical Notions are Subject to Viciſſitudes, ſo the Nature of the Subject makes them lyable to be made doubtful or diſapproved by any thing, that may be diſcovered afterwards, which may leſſen the Reputation of a Naturaliſt; and not only the Qualities and Attributes, but the Cauſes or Things, by accidental Diſcoveries, may diſapprove the Reputation of long approved Opinions; but though the Reputation of Philoſophical Studies were not ſo uncertain, yet the Purſuit of Divine Studies, hinders not the Progreſs of Philoſophical

loſophical Attainments, but as we ſaid before, promotes them. But to Conclude, he ſhews, that though Reputation were to be laid aſide; yet we ought not to contemn the Study of Divinity, ſince their reward is great in Heaven, who by Patient well doing, ſeek for Glory and Honour.

Having thus ſhewn the Excellency of the Study of Divinity above that of Natural Philoſophy, to recommend the Study of Mechanical Philoſophy before other Syſtems, he repreſents briefly, that it is not only to be prefered as it allows the Concourſe of Providence in the Formation and Government of the World, but alſo may be recommended, by the clearneſs of it's Principles and Explications, as well as the ſmall number of thoſe Principles. He likewiſe ſhews the Inſufficiency of other Opinions and Hypotheſes.

Having thus far repreſented what is the Scope of his Diſcourſes, in reſpect of the Studies of Divinity and Philoſophy, and what he propoſes to encourage the Study of Divinity; ſince what he hath ſaid in reſpect of the Style of the Scriptures, hath the like Tendency, and not only to vindicate that ſacred Book from the Imputations of miſled or ill deſigning Cavillers, but likewiſe to promote the Study of the Holy Scriptures, we have ſubjoyned to theſe, his Conſiderations touching the Style of the

Scriptures; where he first shews in what Sense the Style of the Scriptures is to be considered; and having enumerated the Imputations against the Style of those Sacred Writings, he proposes some considerations to defend the Reputation of that Sacred Book, those that find fault with the Style of the Scriptures, judging of it, by the Translations they read it in, for want of skill in the Original Languages, especially the Hebrew. *Another Reason of the Contempt of the Scripture being for want of distinguishing betwixt what the Scripture says, and what is said in Scripture, the Bible not being to be esteemed as an Oration, but as a Body of Laws, like an English Statute-Book. Besides, the Holy Writ was not only designed for the Cotemporaries, and the People of several Nations and Sexes, but that it might comprehend the several Abilities and Dispositions of Men. These Reasons of the Contempt of the Scripture being offered, and some Inferences drawn from them, he proceeds to answer the Objections before Enumerated, shewing several Reasons,* First, *why the Style of the Scriptures is obscure, and why that ought not to discourage them from the Study of them. From this he proceeds to a second Objection, and shews, why the disjoynted Method of the Scriptures ought not to be found fault with; for as* the Heavens are higher than

than the Earth, ſo God's Thoughts are higher than our Thoughts. *Having thus ſhewn, why the Scripture ought not to be undervalued for it's ſeeming Incoherency, he proceeds to ſhew, why it happens ſometimes to ſeem ſo; and though ſome things may ſeem incoherent, yet upon further Conſideration they appear not ſo. And though ſome Texts of Scripture may ſeem Impertinent or Uſeleſs, which is the fourth Objection anſwered, yet* Prophecy came not in the time of Old by the Will of Man, but Holy Men of God ſpake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt. *He further ſhews, the neceſſity of Repetitions in Scripture; and tho' there appeared difficulties in reconciling ſeveral Texts of Scripture, yet we too frequently impute our own faults and deficiences to it; and though the Texts of Scripture in the Common Acceptation of the Words, or by the Context, may eaſily be underſtood; yet we are too forwards in wreſting the Senſe of the Scripture to our own Advantages and Purpoſes. And though the Scripture is repreſented as a Book which is Barren, and not full enough of Inſtruction, he ſhews, that the Reaſon of it's appearing ſo, is for want of duly conſidering it, ſince it is the only Book to promote Piety and Vertue as well as Morality, the Precepts in the Bible, being of more Importance than what are*

contained

contained in other Books; ſince God being an Omniſcient Spirit and Law-giver to all Mankind, and Men are but of Yeſterday, the Truths, Counſels and Exhortations found in Holy Writ ought to have a better Effect and to be prefered by a Chriſtian Reader, and that the Scriptures ought to be our chief Study, and conſtantly kept in a Readineſs. He further ſhews, the ill Effects of Diſputes about Religion, when undertaken by illiterate Perſons: and as ſeveral Perſons object againſt the Style of the Scriptures, becauſe they think it unadorned with Flowers of Rhetorick, *and is deſtitute of Eloquence, he firſt ſhews, that ſeveral Parts of Scripture ſtand not in need of* Rhetorick *to adorn them, and that it ſeems leſs Eloquent in Tranſlations than in the Original, and that different Parts of Mankind have different Notions of Eloquence. And to recommend the Scriptures further, he makes it appear, that they contain much more Matter in few Words than any other Writings. He further ſhews, that the Art of* Rhetorick *drawn from* Cicero's *Writings is far from being a Compleat Syſtem, thoſe Rules being only drawn from* Cicero's *ſucceſsful ways of perſwading People, he making uſe of Figurative Forms of Speech, and particular Contrivances to affect People differently qualifyed; and if others can find more Powerful ways of Expreſ-*

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ſing themſelves, they ought not to be confined by former Preſcriptions. And having further ſhewn, why degraders of the Scriptures ought to be undervalued, he adds it, as a Reaſon, that they make it their Intereſt to find fault with that which would blame them, cenſuring the Scriptures to palliate their own Sins; or becauſe the Sacred Writings expoſe their Deformities to the Eyes of the World, after which making a Digreſſion againſt Prophaneneſs, and inviting one ſort of Witty Men to make amends for the Prophaneneſs of others, he proceeds to anſwer the fourth Objection, ſhewing Examples of a great many Learned Men, that have valued the Scriptures, though ſeveral others have ſeemed to neglect them; and though they have had but little Effect upon ſome Perſons, yet they have had as good ones upon others.

Thus much being ſaid of the Style of the Scriptures, but more largely than we can here repreſent, as the Reſurrection is a Doctrin taught in the Scriptures, we have, in the next place, added, what he hath ſaid of the Poſſibility of the Reſurrection; where having premiſed ſome Obſervations to prevent Ambiguities, he proceeds to ſhew how a Body may be reputed the ſame, deducing the Notion of Identity from the Scriptures, and having anſwered ſome Objections, he further proves by

ſeveral

ſeveral Inſtances the permanency of Particles of Matter paſſing under ſeveral Diſguiſes, which may be found amongſt Vegetables and Animals, and having further ſhewn, how Bodies may be ſaid to differ from one another, he ſhews the Poſſibility of a Bodies being Gloriſyed.

And as Men are too apt to undervalue the Scripture, and even God himſelf, to ſhew how much the Scriptures ought to be valued by thoſe that peruſe them, not only for what they teach, but alſo for the Authors ſake who dictated them to his Secretarys, and Holy Penmen, we have in the next place added his Diſcourſe of the high Veneration Man's Intellect owes to God; where he ſhews, that Men are too apt to ſpeak too familiarly of God and his Works, and that the Knowledg of God's Attributes are chiefly attained by the ſtudy of his Works and his Word, and that at the beſt, the Knowledg we have of his Attributes are but very imperfect. And to ſhew further, the greatneſs of God's Power, he urges the vaſtneſs of the Univerſe, and the Quantity of Local Motion, which is an Argument of God's Power in the Univerſe. He further conſiders, the Motion of fluid Parts, and their Velocity: To which he adds, ſeveral Inſtances of Gods Wiſdom, both in the Fabrick of Animals, as well as their Variety and Symmetry,

metry, and their Uſefulneſs to one another, conſidering the various Opinions of Philoſophers. And as God's Wiſdom in a great Meaſure appears from his Material Works, which ſhews the higheſt Wonder and Adoration due to God, yet God's Wiſdom is more eminently ſhewn by his immaterial Works, Angels being great Specimens of His Wiſdom and Power. He further urges, as a Specimen of Gods Wiſdom, Juſtice and Mercy, the illuſtrious Inſtance of the Day of Judgment, where all Nations and Languages ſhall appear, and God himſelf in his full Splendor. And as a further Inſtance of Gods Wiſdom and Power, he urges the Oeconomy of Mans Redemption; and as God's Attributes ſhew Majeſty, and challenge our Adoration; ſo his Wiſdom may be further infered from Conjectures about other Worlds and Spirits; from whence it appears, how much his Excellences are above ours; ſhewing further the peculiar Prerogatives of God's Knowledg above Mens, adding ſeveral other advantages of Divine Underſtanding. And as the ſtudy and knowledg of God's Attributes are above other Acquirements, ſo we may juſtify our Inquiries into the Nature of God, yet we ought to limit our purſuit of ſuch Subjects, ſince our more particular View of God, may be unſuitable to this Mortal State, and might be fatal to us, becauſe

becauſe too high for us, and above our Capacity. He further ſhews the Duty we owe to our Maker, and the Diſadvantage of neglecting it. To which he adds, the Intent of our Knowledg of God, and the Conſequences of it, and the Reaſons why Men want a due Veneration for God. He further ſhews, the Inferiority of Man's Intellect to God's, and the high Veneration our Intellects owe to him.

Since from what hath been delivered in the former Diſcourſes, it appears, how much God Almighty's Works, as well as Words, exceeds ours, and conſequently, that there are things above the reach of our Capacities, we thought it not improper to add to the foregoing Tracts, what he hath ſaid of things above Reaſon, in which Diſcourſe he firſt ſhews, what is meant by things above Reaſon, and then proceeds to diſtinguiſh betwixt the ſeveral ſorts of them, illuſtrating what he hath ſaid by Moral and Geometrical Inſtances; and then anſwering ſome Objections, ſhews, how much Infinite Underſtanding exceeds our Finite Capacities. Having thus propoſed his Opinion, and illuſtrated it &c. he proceeds to prove it agreeable to Reaſon; and having further conſidered and proved, that there are things above Reaſon, he ſhews how far we may diſcourſe of things above Reaſon; and having giving us a brief Account of the difference of

Ideas,

Ideas, he offers ſome Diſtinctions or Notions of the Conceptions of the Mind, adding ſome Obſervations in reference to things above Reaſon, making due Applications of ſuch Diſtinctions or Notions. He further ſhews, how we ought to conſider things above Reaſon, and how we are to diſcourſe or think of ſuch.

Having thus conſidered things above Reaſon, he adds, ſome Advices in judging of them, ſhewing First, *that about ſuch things we ought not to admit affirmative Aſſertions without ſuch Proofs to evince them, as are ſufficient in their kind.* Secondly, *That we ought not to be too haſty in framing* Negatives, *or to reject Propoſitions or Explications about them, as if they were abſurd or impoſſible.* Thirdly, *That Matter of Fact being proved by Arguments, competent in their kind, we ought not to deny it, only becauſe we cannot explain it, or conceive the Modus of it.* Fourthly, *When we treat of ſuch things, we are not always to think things falſe, that ſeem to contradict ſome received Dictates of Reaſon.* Fifthly, *We are not preſently to reject things as falſe, which we cannot reconcile with other things that are true; and* Laſtly, *we ought not to condemn an Opinion which is liable to ill conſequences or inconveniences, if the Proofs be ſufficient in their kind.*

Having

Having thus in the firſt Part of the ſecond Book, conſidered the Subjects which chiefly relate to the ſtudy of Divinity, we ſhall next proceed to thoſe which relate to the Practice of it; which as they relate to a different Part, and the practice of Piety, we have diſtinguiſhed them under the Title of the ſecond Part of the ſecond Book. The firſt Chapter contains an account of the Martyrdom of Theodora *and* Didymus, *where he ſhews how Men may be in Love without forfeiting their Vertue or good Principles,* Theodora *and* Didymus *both ſhewing good Examples, how we may both Love our Neighbours and our ſelves, and that the Love of Vertue is to be prefered before all temporal Intereſt. In this Tract the Author hath ſhewed us, how Vertue may influence a generous Mind, and though Love may be a concurring Motive in ſome Caſes, yet Vertue ought to be the principal Inducement to guide our Actions, and hath the greateſt Influence on Chriſtian Heroes; and as in this World, God Almighty hath enployed us in his Service, we ought to purſue what he hath commanded, nor can we quit that Reaſonable Service, which is to glorify him by our Lives, except his expreſs Commands or Loyalty to Truth oblige us. He further ſhews, that we ought not to be guilty of Crimes to avoid the greateſt Dangers, that may happen to us, upon*

on the Account of Religion, ſince the Apoſtles *after the Miſuſage of the* Jewiſh *Council,* went from their Preſence rejoycing, that they had been thought Worthy to ſuffer for his Name; *nor ought Perſecutions to be ingloriouſly avoided, our Saviour Suffering more for our ſakes than we can for his; He willingly and patiently enduring the Croſs and deſpiſing the Shame. He further repreſents, the miſtaken Zeal of Idolaters, and how Chriſtians ought to behave themſelves under their Perſecutions; and that we ſhould not only be willing on ſome occaſions to lay down our Lives for our Friend, but when by the Barbarity of our Enemies, our Friends are removed, we ought not* to give up our ſelves to Sorrow as thoſe that have no hope. *To conclude, by the Example of* Theodora *and* Didymus, *he ſhews us, that though we be reviled, impriſoned, perſecuted, and even ſuffer Death, it ought not to deter us from the Purſuit of that Glory which is ſet before us, and promiſed to thoſe that take care to fight the Good Fight of Faith. And having in the firſt Chapter thus ſhewn, how Love and Religion are conſiſtent, and that nothing in this World ought to be prefered to the Love of God,*

In the ſecond Chapter we have delivered, as briefly as we could, what he hath ſaid of Seraphick Love, *which ſhews, that if we have a true Love of God, it will divert us from fixing our Love too much on Earthly Things, and yet, notwithſtanding we ought to have a peculiar regard for Spiritual Things; yet whilſt we are here upon Earth, we ought to allow our Neighbours and Friends a due ſhare, neglecting neither for the ſake of the other, but allowing each what is due. He further ſhews, why we ought to have a peculiar Love for God, who hath endowed us with ſo many Advantages and Bleſſings, adding an Account of the Felicities that attend ſuch Love. And as the Love of God is the way to remove our Love from Mortal Objects, ſo the Paſſion of Love may diſpoſe our minds to the Love of ſublimer Objects; yet as was intimated before, that ought not to be ſo extravagant, but that a convenient degree of Love ought to be appropriated to Inferior Objects, there being different degrees of it owing to a Friend, a Neighbour, or a Wife; but a peculiar Love due to God. He further repreſents and enumerates the Motives we have to love God. And* Firſt, *he repreſents the freeneſs of God's Love and our undeſervedneſs of it, which ought to be ſtrong Inducements to love him; for he not only loved us when we were*

were not at all, but when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son, and while we were yet Sinners Chriſt dyed for us, *and he* who thought it no robbery to be equal with God, took upon himſelf the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeneſs of Man, and became obedient to Death, even the Death of the Croſs. *As another Motive to the Love of God, he urges the Diſintereſtedneſs of his Love, his deſign being only to make us happy, and* partakers of his Glory, having eſcaped the Corruption that is in the Word through Luſt; *the greateſt Service we can do him in return being to ſerve our ſelves, ſince we cannot add any thing to what is infinite; and as good Men cannot increaſe the Happineſs of God, ſo wicked Men can only trouble him, becauſe they oblige him to puniſh them, and as they contribute leſs to glorify his Goodneſs, they add to the Glorification of his Juſtice. Another Motive to the Love of God is, that his Love to us cannot be requited, ſince all the Duties we can pay are Reſtitutions and not Requitals, nor can we be able to recompence him again,* ſince of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, *nor need we wiſh God Almighty more happy, ſince he already enjoys more than we can expreſs. Another Motive to the Love of God, is, the Conſtancy of his Love to us, which he hath plentifully ſhewn upon all Occa-*

ſions, ſo that there is Joy in the Preſence of the Angels over one ſinner that Repenteth, and unto us the Child was born, and unto us the Son was given. *He further ſhews us, the Advantagiouſneſs of God's Love to us, not only in reſpect of this, but a future State, all we enjoy in this World, being the Gifts of God; and ſince to them that continue Patient in well doing, he hath promiſed, Glory and Honour, and Immortality, and Eternal Happineſs; the poſſeſſion of which, will as much exceed our Expectations, as theſe tranſitory things diſappoint them;* for the Eye hath not ſeen, nor the Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive, the things which God hath prepared for them that Love him.

And having ſhewed the Advantages of Seraphick *above ordinary Love, he repreſents the Inconſtancy of Tranſitory Things, and the Preferableneſs of Celeſtial Objects.*

But not to inſiſt on a fuller Account of the following Sheets, we ſhall refer the Reader more ample ſatisfaction to the Epitomy it ſelf, which will illuſtrate the Authors Merit, and recommend what he hath writ to the Reader; for I ſhall therefore only add, as I concluded the former Volume, an Apology for what Errors the Reader may find in this Volume, either thro' Miſtake or Inadvertency, hoping his Candour

will

will Pardon and Correct them, being ſatisfyed, that the Authors Works want no Apology.

As for the Value and Uſefulneſs of what the Author hath ſaid, that is ſufficiently known already, and may be further continued to future Ages, which is the Deſign of this Epitomy, which if it be ſerviceable in promoting the real deſign, and tends to the Increaſe of Piety and Religion, and the ſincere Purſuit of Vertue, I ſhall think my ſelf happy in being concerned in contributing to ſo good a Work.

I am

The Readers

Humble Servant,

Richard Boulton.

THE

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ERRATA.

PAg. 2 l. 1 for in it ſo that; r. *in it*; *ſo that*, pag. 14 l. 16 for to impart, r. *could impart*, pag. 15 l. 30 for whether it be, r. *whether it being*, pag. 37 l. 6 for to, r. *it*, pag. 48. l. 2 for which, r. *where*, pag. 60 l. 23 for Septercury, r. *Septenary*, pag. 64 l. 13 for it is, r. *they are*, pag. 65 l. 18 for and theſe, r. *and if theſe*, pag. 69 l. 18 for Their, r. *the*, pag. 73 l. 15 dele, *in*, id. l. 26 dele *as*, pag. 75 l. 33 for only to, r. *only endeavour to*, pag. 85 l. 7 for Pores, r. *Poles*, pag. 89 l. 10 for out, without r. *with, out* pag. 94 l. 18 dele *as*, pag. 96 l. 34 for the Interpreters, r. *them*, pag. 97 l. 2 for as, r. *is*, pag. 103 l. 7 for Daniel, r. *David*, pag. 109 l. 7 for allayed, r. *alloyed*, pag. 118 l. 32 for Senſe, r. *Tenſe*, p. 136 l. 16 for a Man, r. *Men*, pag. 142 l. 14 for Stream, r. *Streams*, pag. 156 l. 17 for no more tranſlated, r. *no more be tranſlated*, pag. 157 l. 30 for we think they, r. *they think we*, pag. 159 l. 3 for bred up, r. *was bred up*, pag. 163 l. 21 for Speaker, r. *with reſpect to the Speaker* id. l. 28 for look, r. *looking*, pag. 166 l. 12 for without, r. *with*, pag. 192 l. 19 for and another for, r. *and another who for*, pag. 196 l. 24 for ſhall be done, r. *it ſhall be done*, pag. 202 l. 26 for Clax, r. *Calx*, pag. 204 l. 14 for Bodies, beſides r. *Bodies beſides*, pag. 213 l. 18 for diſcovered, r. *diſcover*, pag 225 l. 1 for of Syſtems, r. *of thoſe Syſtems*, pag. 245 l. 23 for Influence and, r. *Influence an* id. l. 25 for in Moſes. r. *on Moſes*, pag. 253 l. 25 for how far, r. *and how far*, pag. 259 l. 8 dele, *anſwered*, pag. 261 l. 24 for as are, r. *as we are* pag. 271 l. 34 dele *into*, pag. l. 288 27 for Ignorance, r. *Knowledg*, pag. 314 l. 35 dele *and*, pag. 320 l. 11 for profuſed r. *profuſe*, id. l. 15 dele *on*, pag., 350 l. 33 for Reſcuer, r. *Reſcue*, pag. 374 l. 13 for It's Intrinſick, r. *It's not Intrinſick*, pag. 384 l. 7 for Schene, r. *Scene* pag. 413 l. 26 for won, r. *one* pag. 446 l. 19 dele *ſo* id. l. 20 for Thought, r. *taught*,

THE

THE THEOLOGICAL WORKS Of the HONOURABLE *ROBERT BOYLE*, Esq; EPITOMIZED.

BOOK II.

PART I.

CHAP. I.

Containing the First Part of the Excellency of Theology, or the Pre-eminence of the Study of Divinity above that of Natural Philosophy.

THE Motives that may induce a Rational Man to the Study of Divinity, are, not only that it is his Duty, but that several Advantages will attend his

his Proficiency in it ſo that; there are ſeveral Inducements to recommend us to the Study of Theological Truths.

The Excellency of the ſubject, a Motive to the ſtudy of Theology.

And *Firſt*, the Excellency and Sublimity of the Subject give us Reaſon to acknowledge a Deity, conſidering the Nobleneſs and Nature of his Attributes. Souls are ſo Naturally inclined to conſider the Nature of Spirits, and to diſcover, *that there are other Spiritual Subſtances, beſides the Souls of Men*, that they are apt to try forbidden ways of obtaining Satisfaction, and rather put themſelves in the Power of the Devil, than to be ignorant of his Being; which is acknowledged by ſeveral Learned Men, who have made ſuch unhappy Attempts. And thoſe Men muſt be much miſtaken in their Notions of a Deity, that can think, and be ſtrangers to the Nature & Attributes of the Divine Perfections, as well as their own Imperfections, who think themſelves able to inveſtigate them, or that dare to deſpiſe them, for *his Greatneſs is incomprehenſible, and his Wiſdom is inſcrutable, Pſal.* 145. yet *he humbles himſelf to look into the Heavens, and the Earth, Pſ.* 147.5.113.6. So that all *the Nations in the World are in compariſon of him, but like the ſmall Drop of a Bucket, or the ſmaller Duſt of a Ballance.* And *Ariſtotle* in his Book *de Mundo* expreſſes the Power, and Wiſdom, and Amiableneſs of God, though in a lofty, yet a Style much inferiour to the Sublimity of the Subject, which without Revelation cannot be ſufficiently underſtood.

The Light of Nature aſſiſted by Revelation.

If it be urged, that Natural Theology is ſufficient to the Knowledge of God, it cannot be denyed, but that the γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, was known to the Heathen Philoſophers; and that the Light of

of Nature may give us ſo much Knowledg of God, as to invite us to the ſtudy of Divinity; our Ignorance being injurious both to our ſelves and our Maker. Yet God knowing himſelf better than Man knows him, we cannot have better Informations of his Nature and Attributes than from himſelf. And the different Proſpects of Heaven, may diſcover the Attributes of it's Maker; for as a Teleſcope will diſcover a greater Number of Stars, and alſo more plainly, than the Naked Eye; ſo Revelation will aſſiſt Reaſon to diſcover more Excellences in God, as well as more diſtinctly. Thus the Writings of Fiſhermen contain more ſuitable Conceptions and Expreſſions of God, than the Writings of the beſt Philoſophers and the moſt civilized Nations.

But there is another Object of this ſtudy, for which we are obliged to Theology; for though Reaſon may direct us to the Knowledge of God, yet his Will or poſitive Laws are owing to his own Revelation. And how Curious Princes and Wiſe Men have been to learn the Cuſtoms of eminent Legiſlators, appears, from their frequent Travels into foreign Countries, to obſerve their Laws, as well as to improve their Learning; that Learned Monarch *Ptolomeus Philadelphus* being at a vaſt Expence to procure an Authentick Copy of the Law of *Moſes*, whom he only eſteemed as an Eminent Legiſlator. But to a Chriſtian they muſt appear more Noble and Worthy Objects of Curioſity, proceeding from an Omniſcient Deity, who hath a perfecter knowledge of the Nature of Man, than other Law-givers, though all put together.

Theology teaches us the Nature and Will of God.

But Theology affords a further Diſcovery of Divine Matters, the Scripture not only teaching us the Nature and Will of God, but giving us an Hiſtorical Account of his Will and Actions, *Alexander* was nobly employed in reading the Grecian Actions in *Homer*; and to know the thoughts of Wiſe Men upon particular Occaſions, is ſo worthy an Inquiſitive Soul, that the Southern Queen was admired for her Journey to hear the Wiſdom of *Solomon*: and the Scripture affords ſo much more Curioſity, than the King of *Macedon*, or the Queen of *Sheba* could enjoy, that it tells us, what God himſelf hath declared of his own Thoughts and Actions upon particular Occaſions; as what God was pleaſed to ſay to *Noah*, *Gen.*vi. about the Deſtruction of the ſinful World, and to *Moſes* concerning the Daughters of *Zelophedad*, *Numb.*27. 7. As alſo the Conferences betwixt God and *Abimelech* concerning the Wife of *Abraham*, *Gen.*20. alſo betwixt God and *Abraham* of the Deſtruction of *Sodom*, *Gen.*28; betwixt God and *Solomon*, about his happy choice, 1 *King.*2. betwixt God and *Jonah*, *Jon.* 4. of the Fate of the greateſt City in the World. To which we may add, what paſſed in relation to the ſeducing Spirit, which undertook to ſeduce the Prophets of *Ahab*, 1 *Kings* 22. from *v.*19, to 24. and that ſtrange Paſſage betwixt God and Satan, where God does not only praiſe but glory in the Mortal, *Job* 1.6,7. and *Job* 2.3. Thus the Scripture informs us of the Tranſactions of another World, which we could never know by the Uſe of our Reaſon, which makes that Book deſerve our Curioſity and Gratitude.

Another

Another Advantage afforded by the Scriptures is, what Judgment God makes of ſome Mens Lives and Deportment, more clearly than the Grounds of Reaſon and Religion do; for tho' they inform us, that God is good and merciful, and may be apt to pardon Mens Sins and Frailties, and accept their imperfect Services, yet we are not ſure he will pardon us except he had promiſed ſo to do; but by Revelation we are told, that he will accept, forgive and pardon thoſe that *ſincerely obey him*, *Heb.* 5.9. and perform the Conditions of his Covenant, whether expreſs or implicit, *Pſal.* 103.17,18. But as he is both the Judge of our Performance of the Conditions, and the Perſons ſincerity, being an Omniſcient Καρδιογνώστης, *Act.* 1.21. and knows more of us than we do of our ſelves, our Conſcience may reaſonably doubt, how God ſhall eſtimate a Mans Sincerity, 1 *John* 3.20 But when he himſelf commended *David*, *Job*, *Noah*, *Daniel*, &c. whilſt alive, and others afterwards, it makes it evident, that God will accept ſuch Obedience as lyes in human Power; and that great Offences may be pardoned, and Mans Happineſs ſecured in another World. To ſatisfy us of which, the Faults of Pious Perſons are recorded in the Scriptures; and no other Writings can give us ſo good apprehenſions and conſolation of the Happineſs or miſery of a future State, as St. *John* does; for *he ſaw in Heaven a great Multitude, not to be Numbered, of all Nations, and Tribes, and People, and Tongues, ſtanding before the Throne, and the Lamb, cloathed in white Robes, with Palms in their Hands, praiſing God and the Lamb*, *Rev.* 11.9. So that Multitudes of imper-

And what Judgment he makes of Men's Lives.

fect Servants have acceſs to God's Throne, beſides Prophets, Apoſtles and Martyrs.

Other Excellences of Divine Studies.

But beſides the ſublime Excellences, Theology ſhews us of a Deity, and his infinite Perfections and Prerogatives, it affords us other Diſcoveries of Angels, the Univerſe, and our own Souls, which though inferiour to the Knowledge of God, are to be preferred for Nobleneſs and Importance before Objects of Natural Philoſophy. And here it may be requiſite to take notice, that we are not to eſtimate the Worth of what we owe to Revelation, by what Impreſſions they make upon us, as we have learnt them in our Catechiſm, or have met with them in Sermons or Books, ſince what we learned as Children in our Youth, we were not old enough to diſcern their Excellences or Importance; and when preſented to our riper Underſtandings, they become ſo familiar, that the Impreſſions are the leſs vigorous upon us; whereas if they were diſcovered to a Heathen Philoſopher or an inquiſitive Perſon, who attained them by the Uſe of his Reaſon, they would be more admired, and be more joyfully received; which appears from the Records of Primitive Times, and the Relations of new Converts to Chriſtianity, in *China*, *Japan*, and other Learned Nations; for though Reaſon could not diſcover them, yet when diſcovered by Revelation, Reaſon approved and embraced them.

Inſtances of the Power of Revelation.

But to proceed to ſome Inſtances of Revelations themſelves: And *firſt*, whether Reaſon may be ſufficient to aſſure us, whether there are ſuch Things as Angels or not: it may, that their Exiſtence is poſſible, and not improbable; yet it

it is a doubt, whether those Heathen Philosophers, who believed the Existence of separate Spirits, were perswaded to that Belief by Reason or Experience, or not rather by Revelation conveyed by an Imperfect Tradition: It not appearing, that they had any satisfactory Reasons or Historical Proofs, or other unquestionable Evidence to convince them of the Beings of such Excellent Spirits; whereas the Scripture informs us of a Multitude of them, and that God made them Immortal and not to propagate their Species; as also that they reside in Heaven, enjoying the sight of God, constantly praising and obeying him, without sinning against him; likewise that they are Intelligent Beings, and powerful, so that one was able to destroy a whole Army; that there are degrees of them, and are at Enmity with Devils and fight against them; and that they can assume Bodies shaped like ours, and quit them at pleasure; that they are concerned in human Affairs, both for the Welfare of Empires and Kingdoms, and to rescue as well as protect good Men. And tho' Splendid and Majestick in their Appearance, yet are ministring Spirits, for the good of the Heirs of Salvation; that they refuse to be adored by Men, exhorting them to pay it to God, and as they were made by Christ in a Sense, who was God and Man, so they call him their Lord, and themselves *Fellow-Servants* to his Disciples.

In respect of bad Angels.

As for those bad Angels, whom the *Gentiles* worshipped as Gods, many doubted, whether they were immortal; but the Scripture tells us, they were created Beings, and wicked Spirits and the ruin of our first Parents. And

though they breed confuſion on Earth, yet they have order amongſt themſelves, and are under a Chief or Leader; we are farther told, that they are not wicked by Nature but Apoſtacy; that their Power is limited, and permitted only by God; that good Men are able to reſiſt and put them to flight, and that thoſe who do Evil, will be of the number of thoſe that judge them hereafter; that their Miſery ſhall be as laſting as their Immortality; and that they believe and tremble at thoſe Truths they perſwade others to reject: and inſtead of being able to reward their Worſhippers with Happineſs, themſelves are miſerable, *reſerved in Chains of Darkneſs to the Judgment of the laſt Day*, where they will be doomed to everlaſting Torments, along with their Admirers.

Our Knowledg of Natural things owing to Theology.

As to things corporeal, thoſe of the moſt comprehenſive Nature, and the greateſt Importance, the Knowledge we have of them is owing to Theology: And firſt, thoſe that admit the Truths, which are revealed in Scripture, allow God to be the Author and Creator of the World. We ſhall not here mention what hath been taught of the World's Eternity; nor ſhall we here take notice, how far the Creation may be evinced by Phyſical Arguments; for whether Reaſon might extend ſo far or no, Revelation-Diſcoveries firſt moved us to the Enquiry; and though Philoſophers allow the World to have a Beginning, they unanimouſly believed, that Matter had none, not imagining, how a Subſtance ſhould be produced out of Nothing; and thoſe that allow God to be the Author of the World, only allow him to have given it Form,

and

and to have formed the Univerſe out of pre-exiſtent Matter; and whereas thoſe that believed the World to be Eternal, or thus formed, could not pretend to tell how old it was, tho' the *Chaldeans* extravagantly pretended to gueſs at 40000 or 50000 Years, Theology tells us, that it was not ſo old by above thirty or forty Thouſand; but gives certain Limits, which Philoſophy leaves undetermined. But Revelation does not only tell us the Time, but the Order and Manner of the Creation; it being impoſſible bare Reaſon ſhould tell us, what preceded the Origin of the firſt Man. And though Theorems of Natural Philoſophy are not to be deduced from a Book deſigned to inſtruct us in ſpiritual Things, yet I think the two firſt Chapters of *Geneſis*, are to be taken in an Hiſtorical and Literal, and not in an Allegorical Senſe; and tho' the Deſign of the Scriptures is to teach us Truths of a higher kind than thoſe of Natural Philoſophy, yet the Book of *Geneſis* may give us ſeveral Hints in reference to the Origin of things, which may be urged in Phyſicks. And as the Antient Philoſophers held the Duration of the World to be indeterminable, and the Stoicks believed it would be deſtroyed by fire, which in Phyſicks is precarious, Theology teaches us, that one Day this World ſhall be deſtroyed, by Anihilation or Transfiguration, by the help of that fire, which ſhall diſſolve the preſent State of it.

The Diſcoveries of Theology in reſpect of Men.

And not only in reſpect of the Creatures in General, but even Men, Theology diſcovers very important things, which Reaſon could not. And *firſt*, the *Epicureans* attributed the Origin of

of Man's Body to the Caſual Concourſe of Atoms; and the *Stoicks* taught, that Men ſprung up like Muſhroms out of the Ground: But the Book of *Geneſis* tells us, that Man was made of Earth by God, and perfected before the Union of the Soul; and as the Scripture gives us an Account of the Origin of Man, ſo it does of the ſtate of the Body after Death, *Acts* 24.15. The Doctrin of the Reſurrection being beyond the reach of Philoſophy, ſo that when St. *Paul* propoſed it to the *Athenian* Philoſophers, *Acts* 17. 20,32. it either excited their wonder or laughter: Theology farther teaches us, that all Mankind is the Off-ſpring of one Man and one Woman, and that the Firſt Woman was formed after a different manner from the Firſt Man, being taken from his ſide; and that *Adam* and *Eve* were not *firſt* Infants, but at once compleat Human Perſons; and as all Men's Bodies ſhall riſe again, ſo they ſhall not dye a ſecond time. And though the Light of Reaſon may tell us much of the Exiſtence of Human Souls, as well as of their Properties and Duration; yet Revelation gives us more aſſurance of it, and tells it us more clearly, he who made them beſt knowing, what they are, and how long they are to laſt. And as the Soul is diſtinct from the Body, and cannot be deſtroyed with it, ſo it hath a different Origin from the Souls of other Creatures, being God's own Workmanſhip and united to the Body already formed, from thence to paſs into a State, where Death hath no Power.

But

But perhaps it may be objected, that the Immortality of the Soul may be proved by the Light of Nature, and hath been demonſtrated by *Carteſius*; but though Natural Philoſophy may prove the Immortality of the Soul, againſt the Arguments of Atheiſts and Epicureans, they thinking it Mortal, becauſe not a Subſtance, but only a Modification of a Body, which muſt periſh the frame or ſtructure of the Body being diſſolved; Yet if it appears from the Intellectual Operations of a Rational Soul, which Matter however Modifyed cannot be capable of, that it is a diſtinct Subſtance from a Human Body, the diſſolution of the later does not imply the deſtruction of the former, which is as much a real Subſtance as Matter it ſelf. But yet though the Operations of the Rational Soul and other Mediums, may prove the Soul in this ſenſe to be immortal, yet if we diſpute with Philoſophers, as the *Carteſians*, who allow God to be the Creator and Preſerver of things, the ſame Proofs will not abſolutely evince, that it ſhall never ceaſe to be, though it may be ſufficient againſt the *Epicureans*, or others, who deny God to have any thing to do with it; for we are not ſure, but that God may have ſo ordered it, that by the continuance of his ordinary Concourſe, the Soul may ſurvive the Body; and yet ſince the Soul is not created till it is juſt infuſed into the Body, ſo it may be anihilated when ſeparated from the Body, God's ordinary concourſe to ſupport it being withdrawn; upon which it may relapſe into it's primitive Nothing; ſo that notwithſtanding the Phyſical Proofs of the Spirituality of the Soul, we are obliged to Revelation

An Objection conſidered.

lation to tell us, that it's duration ſhall be endleſs, for *Carteſius*'s Expreſſions ſhew, that tho' he pretends, that the Soul is diſtinct from the Body, yet he does not ſay it is abſolutely immortal; *Cur de immortalitate Animæ nihil ſcripſerim, jam dixi in ſynopſi mearum Meditationum. Quod ejus ab omni corpore diſtinctionem ſatis probaverim, ſupra oſtendi. Quod vero additis, ex diſtinctione Animæ à Corpore, non ſequi ejus immortalitatem, quia nihilominus dici poteſt, illam à Deo talis Naturæ factam eſſe: ut ejus Duratio ſimul cum Duratione Vitæ Corporeæ finiatur, fateor à me refelli non poſſe. Neque enim tantum mihi aſſumo, ut qui aquam de iis, quæ à libera Dei voluntate dependent, humanæ rationis vi determinare aggrediar. Docet Naturalis Cognitio* &c. *ſed ſi de abſoluta Dei poteſtate queratur, an forte decreverit, ut humana anima iiſdem temporibus eſſe deſignant, quibus Corpora quæ illis adjunxit, ſolius Dei eſt reſpondere.* And if Natural Reaſon cannot demonſtrate the Exiſtence of the Soul after Death, much leſs can it determin it's Condition after it is ſeparated from the Body; of which *Carteſius* gives his Opinion further, in a Letter to the King of *Bohemia's* Daughter; where he confeſſes, that by meer Reaſon we may make conjectures to our advantage, and have hopes, but not aſſurance; to which he adds, the imprudence of quitting what is certain for uncertainty; for which Reaſon we ought not to ſeek after Death.

How far Reaſon may determin the Immortality of the Soul and a future ſtate.

And indeed all that Reaſon can demonſtrate may be comprized under two Heads; *Firſt*, That as the Soul is incorporeal, it is not neceſſary it ſhould periſh with the Body, but may laſt for ever, if God hath not ordered it otherwiſe;

wise; *Secondly*, as the Soul is a Substance that hath the Power of thinking, it will retain that Power though separated from the Body. But whether these Considerations may make a separate State desireable, we may justly question; for Immortality and perpetual Duration is rather what may be pre-supposed requisite to Felicity than Part of it, and makes the Possessors only more happy or miserable according to the state it is annexed to; and though it is the Opinion of some Schoolmen, that it is better to be miserable than not at all; yet our Saviour says of the Disciple that betrayed him, That *it had been good for that Man, if he had never been born*, *Mark* 14.21. But farther, that Reason alone cannot assure us of the Souls Immortality, may appear from the Nature of the thing; for since the Soul and Body were not united by meer Physical Agents, but by God's free and arbitrary Institution, and such Conditions as he thought fit, we know not but that one Condition might be, that they should both be dissolved together; but though the Soul should continue after the Body, Reason cannot determin, what will become of the Soul in that state, as whether united to another Substance or Vehicle, and of what kind that shall be; whether to an unorganized Body, unfit for exercising the same Functions with the Human Body, as the Souls of Fools are here, united to such Bodies, that they cannot discourse, or Philosophize; and other Souls are joyned with distempered Bodies, which makes them unfit to walk, though they feel Pain; so that we are not sure but that a separated Soul may be united to a portion of Matter,

Matter, that it cannot move, nor receive Information by the Intervention of it. But ſuppoſing ſuch an Union may not make a Soul miſerable, we ſhall next conſider, that if the *Soul* were free from any Union, and enjoyed the Liberty of her own Nature, it may be queſtioned, whether the Power of thinking would make her happy; for ſuppoſing one that loved to enjoy his Thoughts undiſturbed, ſhould go to dine at an Inn, attended only with a Servant, and a Book, that he might be undiſturbed that day; the moſt addicted to thinking would ſoon grow weary, had he no other Variety of Objects to divert him, but reading, ſeeing, and converſing, and neither put his Thoughts in Execution by moving his Body, nor to impart them otherwiſe by Diſcourſe or Writing. And though thinking mixed with converſation and action, is a pleaſant way of paſſing the time, yet to be alone, would be a tireſom way of ſpending the time, which muſt be Eternal.

The Redemption of Man, &c. only to be known by Revelation.

But beſides what we have mentioned of the Divine Attributes, the Univerſe and a human *Soul*, there are other things of a Divine and Noble Nature, which may exerciſe the greateſt Wits, and which may gratify their Enquiries into them, which are not to be known without the help of Revelation; as the Myſtery of the Trinity, the Redemption of Mankind, and God's Decrees concerning Men: into the Nature of one of the former *the Angels deſire to pry*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. and one that had been caught into Heaven cryed out ὦ Βάθος, &c. *Rom.* 11. 33. and ſince God's Wiſdom is boundleſs, it may have more ways than one to ſhew it ſelf; and though the

the World be full of the Productions of his Wiſdom, yet the *Scripture* may contain excellent Signatures of the ſame Attribute; for it would be injurious to a Deity, who hath all Perfections united, to think he can diſcloſe his Perfections no other ways but by the direction of Matter and Motion, and be the Object of our Studies and Admiration, otherwiſe than as a Creator.

But beſides what we have mentioned, there are other things which Reaſon without Aſſiſtance could not underſtand; which are not clearly revealed in Scripture, but deſerve the ſearch of a pious Soul, and one that is Curious and Philoſophical; as whether the ſatisfaction of Chriſt was requiſite to purchaſe Man's Redemption, and appeaſe God's Juſtice. or whether God being ſupreme Governour of the World might not remit freely the Penalties of Sin. It is likewiſe worthy our Enquiry, how Men's Juſtification to God was tranſacted, conſidering how abſtruſe the Doctrin is, that is uſually delivered? We may likewiſe enquire, whether our Souls were pre-exiſtent to our Bodies in a happier ſtate, as ſeveral Learned Men believe? It is likewiſe worthy our Enquiry to know, whether after Death, the Soul immediately paſſes into Heaven or Hell, or be laid aſleep and inſenſible for want of Organs, till joyned again to the Body at the Reſurrection? Or, whether it be conveyed into ſome ſecret Receſſes, it remains in a good or bad Condition till Judgment, neither expoſed to the Torments of Hell, nor participating of the Joys of Heaven? And ſhall we not be likewiſe inquiſitive, whether this World

at

at the laſt day, ſhall be anihilated, or after Diſſolution be transfigured into a better State? as alſo, whether in that future State, we ſhall know one another, as *Adam* did *Eve*, when he awaked, though he never ſaw her before? and likewiſe, whether we ſhall have Perſonal Affections for one another, as Friends, or Relations? or, whether ſuch things ſhall be obliterated and forgot?

Revelation above the reach of Reaſon.

Beſides theſe, there are other Subjects of Curioſities, which the Scripture gives us more Cognizance of, than all the Writings of the Antient Philoſophers. Yet it may be objected, that Revelation in many Caſes puzles Reaſon, the later being obliged to make it's Hypotheſis concur with the former; but though Reaſon cannot give ſo much as probable determinations of ſuch things as may be deduced from Revelations by Reaſon; yet Revelations rather than being a burthen to Reaſon, are only ſo, as Leathers are to Hawks, which promote their flight towards Heaven; and enable them to diſcern more than they could without them. On this Occaſion, we may ſay, that by the help of Reaſon, ſeveral Theological Truths may be ſtill improved, and Texts of Scripture be yet more clearly explained, and better Reflections made on the Scriptures, than have been yet made by the beſt Commentators, or even the Fathers themſelves; for to qualify a Commentator, a competent critical Knowledge is not only requiſite, but a Concern for the Intereſt of Chriſtianity, and Judgment to collect what may beſt contribute towards it.

That

That the Knowledge of thoſe Languages in which the Scripture was Originally wrote, is requiſite to make a good Expoſitor, is evident both from the Nature of the thing, and the miſtakes made for want of it; for though the Fathers were Witneſſes of the Doctrin and Government of the Antient Churches, and were both Pious, Eloquent, and Learned, yet the Greek Fathers had ſo little skill in Hebrew, and the Latins in Hebrew or Greek, that the moſt of them leave the ſubjects they write on, as obſcure as they found them, and miſled by bad Tranſlations, much miſtake the true Senſe; ſo that good Divines are but indifferent Expoſitors, their Sermons being rather Encomiums, than Expoſitions of Divine Myſteries. And though ſome Moderns are more accurate than the Latin Fathers, yet when I compare them with the Originals, I cannot but wonder how they ſhould make ſuch Miſtakes; there being ſcarce a Chapter which would not admit of a better Tranſlation, and more creditable to that Sacred Book. *The Knowledge of Languages requiſite to expound the Scriptures.*

But beſides the Knowledg in Languages, Judgment and Concern for Theological Truths are alſo requiſite, which may enable them to propoſe what may be moſt advantagious, and add reputation to the ſubject; for moſt are ſo much byaſſed to Parties, that they are apt to take Notice chiefly of thoſe things that may be moſt diſadvantagious to their Adverſaries, or fittеſt to anſwer their Objections. *Judgment and Eſteem of the ſubject alſo requiſite.*

But few ſearch the Scriptures for ſuch things, as being clearly and judiciouſly propoſed, might add Illuſtration to the Dignity of that Book;

and ſhew the Excellency of it's Oeconomy, and the Depths of it's Contrivances, or to ſhew the Wiſdom of it's Diſpenſations, ſo as to give credit to Religion of any kind. But to do this, good Judgment is requiſite, without which, and Critical Learning, the beſt Obſervations may be overſeen; and ſuch things may be propoſed as Myſteries, which are not well grounded, or not ſufficiently weighed, and tend to the diſadvantage of what they would recommend; and perhaps it is rather want of Judgment than good Will, that hath made the reputation or ſenſe of the Scriptures ſuffer. And when I conſider, how much more advantagiouſly the Sacred Writings have been handled by Learned Men, than Vulgar Expoſitors, and that ſome of the beſt were not both great Philoſophers and great Criticks, I am inclined to think, that if a Perſon endowed with ſuch Qualifications, and concerned for the advancement of Truth, ſhould exerciſe himſelf with Theological Matters, his Explications and Diſcoveries would much more tend to the advancement of Religion and Divine Truths, they wanting not Excellences but skilful Expoſitors; for the Wiſdom of God is no more to be eſtimated by common Expoſitions, than his Wiſdom in the contrivance of the World may by *Magyrus* or *Euſtachius*'s Phyſicks, the Myſteries of the Scripture being more Numerous than thoſe I have obſerved, as well as the Myſteries of Nature are more than what Philoſophers have obſerved and explained. All that Poets, Orators, and Lovers, have ſaid of the Beauty of the Eyes, will not ſo much recommend them to a Philoſopher,

ſopher, as the skilful Diſſection, and the uſe of the Parts given by *Schiner* in his *Oculus*, and *Des Cartes* in his Dioptricks. And though I neither allow nor admire all that is propoſed, as Myſterious and Rare by ſeveral Interpreters; yet ſeveral things in Scripture may be compared with thoſe we meet with in Nature; for though the Wonders concerning the Generation of Animals, recited by ſeveral Authors, ſeem incredible, ſuch as *Pliny*, *&c.* propoſe, yet by what *Galen* hath ſaid, *de Uſu Partium*, and *Harvey* hath offered of the Generation of Animals, and the ſtructure of their Bodies, I have received more ſatisfaction in the Works of Nature, than all the others Romantick Stories. Thus a cloſe Account of the moſt valid Parts of Scripture, with Natural Reflections, and ſuch as the Subjects might bear, made by a Philoſopher, and a Critical Speculator, would be more entertaining to a Rational Man, and raiſe in him a higher Veneration for the things explained, than ſlight and ill grounded Expoſitions of Superficial Writers.

Theology of further Uſe than what Divines or Philoſophers have made of it.

And I queſtion not, but a further Uſe may be made of Scripture, than Philoſophers or Divines have yet thought on. Some indeed have ventured to look back, before the Fall of *Adam*, for the Decrees of God, with reſpect to his Election or Reprobation, but ſuch diſapproved Speculations are inadequate with what we mean; for the *Encyclopedias* and *Panſophias* ſo much aimed at, comprehend not all that Reaſon improved by Philoſophy, and elevated by Revelation, may attain to. The Scripture indeed informs us of the Myſtery of

Man's Redemption as far as is neceſſary for our Salvation, *Act.* 20. 27, and the Corpuſcular Philoſophy endeavours mechanichally to deduce Phænomena from Matter and Local Motion, but this is no more than an *Epicycle* of the Univerſal Syſtem of God's Contrivances, and is but a part of what may be known by the joynt Theory of Nature improved by Scripture, yet both theſe ſeem to be but Parts of the Univerſal Hypotheſis, whoſe Objects are *the Nature, Works and Counſels of God as far as we can diſcover them in this Life*: For thoſe whom God hath endowed with mature Reaſon, think it not ſufficient to conſider, that God hath limited the Works of his Power, Wiſdom and Goodneſs, to a few Ages conſideration, concerning the Production and Laws of Motion and Matter; and the Inhabitants of this Globe, which in reſpect of the Univerſe is but a Phyſical Point; for there ſeems to be four general Communities of Creatures; the *firſt* conſiſts of things merely corporeal; the *Second*, of Mankind, Intellectual Beings, being united with organized Bodies; the *Third* are Good, and the *Fourth* Evil Angels, whether Beings perfectly free from united Matter, or joyned with that which is fine and ſubtle, or a more inviſible Spirituous Subſtance.

Angels and Devils worthy our conſideration.

Nor are we to think, that Angels and Devils, becauſe ſeldom ſeen are unworthy our conſideration; for their Excellency as well as Number is ſo great, that they are repreſented as the Heavenly Hoſt, ſitting on the right and left Hand of God. Of the good Angels our Saviour mentions twelve Legions at his Command, *Mat.* 26. 53. And *Daniel* ſaith, that to the *Antient of Days*,

Days, *Daniel* 7. 10. Millions, and hundreds of Millions ſtood before him. And of the Evil Angels, the Goſpel tells us a Legion, which is betwixt ſix and ſeven Thouſand, poſſeſſed a ſingle Perſon, *Mark* 5.9. *Luke* 8.30. If we conſider matter only as a brute thing capable only of local motion, and by that means producing it's Effects, without being capable of any Intellectual Perception, either of Love or Hatred; and farther, if we conſider, the Rational Soul as an Immaterial Being, which bears the Image of God, endowed not only with Intellect but with Free Will; the Soul of Man will appear to be of more value than all the World; which though admirably contrived, and worthy of it's Author, conſiſts but of Matter variouſly ſhaped and aſſociated by Local Motion (as Meal may be put into different Forms of Paſte) without knowing their own Nature, their Author or Fellow Creatures. And as the Rational Soul is more valuable than meer Matter, being of a more excellent Nature, than the moſt curious Mechaniſm, *viz.* a human Body, ſo to enquire into it's future ſtate, is a more Noble Subject of Curioſity, than what will happen to the World; and might have been more deſireable to *Nebuchadnezzar*, than to have his Myſterious Dream ſhadow out the Characters and Fates of four of the greateſt Monarchs in the World, *Dan.* 2.31, 32. And as a Man is endowed with Free Will, all material things move as they are moved, and cannot reſiſt the Will of God by any determining Power of it's own. And as Angels are above human Souls, no doubt but in the Government of them, there are greater ſigns of God's Wiſ-

dom, Power and Goodneſs, than in the Direction of meer Matter, and therefore the Contemplation of the Government of theſe is a more Noble Object, than the Laws of the Motion of Matter and the Reſults of ſuch Motions.

The Government of the World more Noble than it's Formation.

And we find in Scripture, that though in forming the World, God only ſpoke a few words, which ſoon had their Effect, yet in order to the Government of the World, and promoting their happineſs. he made uſe of Laws, and Commands, as alſo Revelations, Miracles, Promiſes, Threats, Exhortations, Mercies and Judgments; and though he might well ſay, *what could I have done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done?* *Iſa.* 5.4. he had cauſe to add, *wherefore when I looked, that it ſhould bring forth Grapes, brought it forth wild Grapes?* to which he adds, *of Iſrael, I have ſpread out my hands all the day to a rebellious People, Iſa.* 45.2. From whence it appears, that God's Attributes were more conſpicuous in governing the three laſt Communities of Creatures, than in forming the firſt. And ſince all immaterial Subſtances are immortal, and Matter it ſelf is believed ſo too, thoſe Revolutions which ſucceed the Day of Judgment, when the Conſtitution of this World, if not the Matter, is deſtroyed, will perhaps make way for new Forms of Matter and different Orders, and the Intellectual Communities, may in that time, undergo ſucceſſive Changes and Alterations; and may contribute as much to the Glory of Divine Attributes, as the Formation of the World, or the Oeconomy of Man's Salvation. And ſome Prophetical Paſſages in Scripture as well as the Apocalypſe, intimate, that God will perform

more

more Noble Things than Mechanical Philoſophy can extend to, or what Divines have aimed at: ſeveral of which may be diſcovered by ſearching the Scriptures; St. *John* in the beginning of the Revelations pronouncing them happy, that read the things contained in this Prophecy, and obſerve them; which ſhews, that by comparing the Indications contained in the Prophetick Writings, and the Events and Occurrences of this World, and the Church, God Almighty's Providence will be wonderfully diſplayed. The early Diſcoverys of ſuch Things are no mean Advantages, not only making us happy here, but as *Daniel* and St. *John*, the one was highly favoured, and the other repreſented a beloved Diſciple.

And that the Fore-knowledg of Divine Diſpenſations, which the Scripture affords us, is highly to be eſteemed, appears, ſince as St. *Paul* ſays, the Angels which *are Principalities and Powers in heavenly Places*, learnt from the Church, a great deal *of the manifeſt Wiſdom of God*, *Epheſſ.* 3. 10.

Men's want of Enquiry into God's Diſpenſations a diſadvantage to the diſcovery of his Attributes.

But not to be preſumptuous in Conjectures of thoſe Diſpenſations, which will not begin till the World is at an end, I ſhall repreſent, that we may ſafely endeavour to advance our Knowledg of God's Attributes, without prying into his Secrets in reſpect of Futurity, and if Men were willing to promote God's Glory, and their own Satisfaction, his Attributes would be more fully diſcovered than they are. If we conſider the Simple Eſſence of God, we muſt perceive, that what concerns his Attributes muſt be a Noble Subject of Enquiry, and worthy our Knowledg;

the Knowledg of all Particulars of which are not ſo invincible, but that a Philophical Head, acquainted with Revelations, may look farther into thoſe myſterious Subjects, which have been ſo indifferently handled, that what they have ſaid is not only unworthy of God, but Men; which will appear from thoſe handſom Notions *Carteſius* has given us of ſome of God's Attributes. And though we can never hope to know all, yet farther Progreſs might be made, would we but propoſe particular Doubts and Enquiries of ſome of his Attributes, examin Hypotheſes, eſtabliſh Theorems, and draw Concluſions, with the ſame Attention applyed about other Subjects of much leſs value; and *Carteſius* confeſſes, it coſt him ſix Weeks time to ſolve a Problem of *Pappus*. And *Pythagoras* was ſo addicted to Geometrical Problems and Speculations, that he offered a *Hecatomb* for the Diſcovery of the 47*th*. Problem of the *Firſt* Book of *Euclid*, containing a ſingle Property of one ſort of right lined Triangles; and if a Chriſtian Philoſopher ſhould conſider but what Noble Subjects Divine Attributes are, they might exerciſe their Parts as well as recompence their Trouble. But I am apt to think, that it is not Lazineſs ſo much as a Miſtake that occaſions this neglect, thinking that but little can be known of ſo incomprehenſible a Subject as God, only that his Attributes are like himſelf, infinite, and not to be underſtood by finite Underſtandings; but though we cannot comprehend him, and have full and adequate Notions of him, yet we may improve our Knowledg, and make an endleſs Progreſs in it; as *Pythagoras*, no doubt, knew ſeveral Properties

ties and Affections of a Triangle, before he was acquainted with that famous one; and though *Euclid* and *Archimedes* have demonſtrated ſeveral other Affections of it, yet the Subject is not quite exhauſted.

The Contemplating of God and his Attributes a fruitful Subject.

The Divine Attributes are ſuch fruitful Themes, that the whole Univerſe and all it's *Phænomena*, do but imperfectly expreſs the Wiſdom of God, and ſome few of his Attributes. And it is not to be admired, that Angels ſhould adore God and admire his Perfections, ſince even they can form but inadequate Notions of him, and by their Number endeavour to make amends for their Incompleatneſs; but his Infinity ought not to diſcourage our Enquiries into his Nature and Attributes, ſince we may diſcover as much of him as our Nature is capable of, it being no harm for one that drinks out of a River, that he cannot drink all, as long as he can drink as much as he pleaſes, and what is ſufficient to quench his Thirſt.

The Obligations to purſue the ſtudy of Theology.

Having thus ſhewn, how Noble the Subjects Theology propoſes are, we ſhall next conſider, how much we are obliged to purſue the ſtudy of them. Which may be comprehended under theſe two, *Obedience* and *Gratitude*. That it is the will and command of God, to learn thoſe Truths he hath been pleaſed to teach, either in reſpect of his Nature or Attributes, or the ways he would be worſhipped in, will eaſily appear, for not to mention the Injunctions of Scripture, our Reaſon will tell us, that we ought to purſue what he hath ordered to be taught us, as far as our Capacities and Opportunities will admit; and if it be the Will of God we ſhould ſearch after

after Truth, it muſt conſequently be our Duty; for though the Nature of the Subject would not, God's commands would lay an Obligation on us; for as he is ſupreme Lord of all his Creatures, he hath both a full Right to make what Laws he pleaſes, as well as to enjoyn what Service he thinks fit, and to puniſh thoſe who violate the one, or deny the other. And thus *Adam* before his Fall and Tranſgreſſion had a Law impoſed, which was obliging, becauſe the Will and Pleaſure of him that gave it; ſo that Man ſeems to be ſubject to the Laws of God, not as obnoxious to him, but as a Rational Creature, and things become a Duty by being commanded which were not ſo in their own Nature. And if *Adam* in his ſtate of Innocency, when he was happy and taſted of God's bounty, without wanting his Mercy, was, by Obedience, obliged to conform to a Law indifferent in it's ſelf; we in our fallen Condition ought to be obedient to his Will, and to ſtudy his Truths, and to purſue ſuch things as have Intrinſick Goodneſs, ſo that it would be a Duty, though not commanded; beſides the recompence, which makes it an Advantage.

Gratitude a Motive to the ſtudy of Divinity.

But not only Obedience and Intereſt ought to engage us in the Study of Divinity; but Gratitude; to which we have ſeveral Motives; Ingratitude being not only worſe than ordinary Vices, but this kind of it, being worſe than Ordinary Ingratitude: For as we are great Debtors to God, as he is the Author and Preſerver of our Beings, ſo we are for thoſe continual Benefits, and all the Prerogatives and Favours we receive from him as Men; and greater ones as

as we are Chriſtians. But to ſhew in what a Degree God is our Benefactor, would be to engage into too extenſive and immenſe a Subject, and which we have elſewhere diſcourſed of; for even thoſe that value themſelves upon the ſtudy of Philoſophy, and deſpiſe other Men concerned in other Parts of Philoſophy and Knowledg, are obliged to God for that very Skill God Almighty hath vouchſaved them; for it is God who made Man, *unlike the Horſe and the Mule, who have no Underſtanding*, Pſal. 32. 9 and hath endowed him with Knowledg above the Beaſt that periſhes. And we ought to have a great deal of care, when we have plentiful Endowments beſtowed upon us, leſt we ſay, *My Power and the Might of my Hand hath gotten me this Wealth*, Deut. 8. 10, 11, 12. to which he adds 13, 14. *Thou ſhalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is He that giveth the Power to get Riches.*

Objects as well as Abilities requiſite to the Acquiſition of Knowledge.

But endowing Men with Reaſon is not all he hath done towards making them Philoſophers, Objects as well as Abilities being requiſite to the Knowledg of particular Things. And if Angels, thoſe Sons of God and *Morning Stars*, Job 38. 5, 6, 7. were created before the World, which celebrated the Foundations of the Earth with Songs and Acclamations; ſeveral Perſons may be endowed with Reaſon, though unacquainted with the Myſteries of Nature, ſhe her ſelf having not yet received a Being. So that God having both made the World, and furniſhed Man with Abilities to contemplate it, we are obliged to him for our Knowledge of it. And as the Endowments of Knowledg are Inducements to Know-

Knowledg, ſo Ingenuity is an Obligation to expreſs Gratitude, and is the moſt acceptable way to expreſs it in, ſince Philoſophers may both exerciſe their Gratitude towards God, and procure him that of others. And how pleaſing Men's Praiſes are to God, appears from what is ſaid by the Royal Poet, who *was a Man after God's own Heart*, who introduces God ſaying, *who ſo offereth Praiſe, glorifyeth me*, the word *offereth* ſignifying *Sacrifice* in the Original, and elſewhere thoſe that praiſed God are ſaid to *ſacrifice to him the Calves of their Lips*, *Hoſ.* 14. 2. And the *Pſalms* in the Original are called *the Book of Praiſes*. And that many of his Praiſes were ſuch as a Naturaliſt may give, appears from this, *How manifold are thy Works, O Lord? Pſal.* 104. 24. and elſewhere, *the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament ſheweth his handy Work*, &c. *Pſal.* 19. 1. and *I will praiſe thee, becauſe I am fearfully and wonderfully made, marvellous are thy Works, and that my Soul knoweth right well*, *Pſal.* 139. 14. and in ſeveral Devout Tranſports, he invites Heaven the Stars, the Earth, and the Seas, and all inanimate Creatures to celebrate their Maker's Praiſe, which might very well become a Naturaliſt, who perceiving his Wiſdom, Power and Goodneſs, and viewing his Attributes more nearly, may in ſome Senſe concur with him in glorifying their Author.

It would ſeem a great piece of Ingratitude, ſhould a Man receive a great many Favours from a Prince, not to enquire, what manner of Man he was, and the Manner of thoſe Obligations, which were not only in themſelves worthy

thy of Curioſity; but about which the Monarch had declared himſelf deſirous, they ſhould be enquired after; and it would be very ungrateful to neglect the Knowledg of that which gave us the Knowledg of what other things we know, and which he deſigned to lead us to the Knowledg of him; which is to miſuſe our Benefactor, who obliged us, uſing ſome of his Favours, as Inducements to an unthankful diſregard of the reſt of his Intentions, which Ingratitude is againſt the Laws of Ingenuity and Juſtice, which would oblige us to glorify the Maker of all things, upon our own Account as well as the reſt of his Works; for as Man alone is endowed with a Rational Soul, and is the only Being that can return Thanks and Praiſes in this World, and therefore ought to do ſo, both for himſelf and other Creatures, ſo it is Man's Prerogative Advantage, that God hath made no other Creature capable of doing ſo; for Reaſon is ſuch a Characteriſtick of Divinity, that had any other Creature ſhared of it, it had leſſened Man's Univerſal Empire. So that if he who could have made Creatures ſuperiour as well as inferiour to Man, hath given us the Prerogative, the Obligation is the greater.

An Objection againſt the Study of Divinity Anſwered.

But notwithſtanding the Excellency of what is revealed, and the Scripture which contains them, if any ſhould excuſe the Neglect of the Study of Divinity, and urge, that for Laymen the explicite Knowledg but of a few Points is requiſite to Salvation, which are plainly ſummed up in the Apoſtle's Creed, and are often ſo plainly ſet down in Scripture, that one need not much ſearch the Scripture to find them there.

I cannot indeed deny, but that through God's great Goodneſs, *who is willing to have all Men ſaved, and come to the Knowledg of the Truth*, 1 *Tim.* 3. 4. a much leſs Number of Articles may be requiſite than are contained in ſome long Confeſſions of Faith, ſome of which have leſſened Charity rather than promoted Knowledg; but then without Enquiry, a Man cannot ſatisfy himſelf, that all the Fundamental Articles of Religion are contained in the Apoſtles Creed; and *ſecondly*, the Creed only contains, what a Man is to believe, not what he is to do, whereas the Scripture tells us, not only what we are to believe, but what Rules we are to live by; Obedience to Divine Laws being as neceſſary, as the Belief of it's Myſteries; and *thirdly*, beſides things neceſſary, there are ſome things uſeful, to make us underſtand better, and more firmly believe, as well as perſiſt in the Practice of what is neceſſary. And whether theſe Words, ἐρευνᾶτε τὰς γραφὰς, *John* 5. 39. are to be rendered in the Imperative or the Indicative Mood; St. *Paul* directs, that the Word of Chriſt may *dwell richly in us*, *Col.* 3. 16. So that it may be neceſſary as a Duty, though not to the means of attaining Salvation; and indeed it is much more excuſable to want or miſtake the Knowledge of Truth, than to deſpiſe or neglect it. And the Goodneſs of God to illiterate Perſons, is in reſpect of their Frailties, not to countenance Lazineſs; and though God may Pardon thoſe who are miſtaken in the ſearch of Truth, yet perhaps he will not excuſe thoſe that deſpiſe them. But whether by this neglect of Divinity, the Perſons conſult their own Safety or not, it will

will not much recommend their Ingenuity.

Wilful neglect of our Duty a great degree of Ingratitude.

For when God hath given greater Intellectual Abilities than to the Generality of Chriſtians, and we willingly come ſhort of the Knowledge of the Myſteries and Truths of Chriſtianity, which he hath invited as well as commanded us to ſearch after, it is not much of Gratitude; does it look like Gratitude, to receive Underſtanding and the hopes of Eternal Felicity, without enquiring into the Nature and Purpoſes of that good God, who hath revealed them in ſuch an Excellent way? To be ſolicitous about the Properties of an *Atom*, and careleſs of the Attributes of the *Great God, who formed all Things*, Prov. 10 6, 10. & to ſpend more time in Enquiring after the Nature of Inſects, than the Myſterious Generation of the Son of God, and to be more concerned for the Knowledge of the Corporeal World than the Author of it? Is it a grateful reſpect to thoſe Doctrins, which God ſometimes ſends Prophets, Apoſtles, and Angels, nay, his only Son to reveal to us, to believe them with an Implicity Faith, according to the Notions of the Societies they belong to, rather than to take pains to ſtudy them? What regard does it ſhew to Religion, when we Queſtion the Truth of a Propoſition in *Staticks* about the Centre of Gravity, or in Geometry about the Properties of a curve Line, and yet take the Articles of Faith, Matters of everlaſting conſequence, upon the Authority of other Men as ſubject to miſtake as themſelves; when ſatisfaction may be had from the Word of God? The *Noble Bereans*, when the Goſpel was propoſed to them, *ſearched*

ed the Scriptures dayly, whether thoſe things were ſo, Acts 18. 11.

It would look very odly, ſhould a Man refuſe to learn to read more than would entitle him to the benefit of the Clergy, to ſave him from being hang'd, ſuch a one being ſcarce like a Lover of Learning; and he who neglects all neceſſary Truths, but thoſe which are ſufficient to ſave him from Hell, will have little better Title to the Love of God and his Truths. The Antient Prophets, though inſpired by God, were diligent to learn the Circumſtances of Divine Diſpenſations; and ſome are of ſuch an excellent Nature, *that the Angels themſelves deſire to look into them,* 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. And though all the Truths in Scripture may not be neceſſary, the ſtudy of them, is both a Duty, and a Happineſs. King *David* deſired, that *his Eyes might be opened to ſee the wondrous things of God's Law,* And in the beginning of the Revelation, he is pronounced happy that reads what is there written, *Rev.* 1. and it is a general Command, *he that hath Ears let him hear, Mat.* 11. 15. on which *Grotius* thus Paraphraſes; *Underſtanding is chiefly beſtowed on us by God, that we may exerciſe them on thoſe Precepts which reſpect Piety.*

The Advantages the Third Motive to the ſtudy of Divinity.

But to proceed to the laſt Inducement to the ſtudy of Divinity, which conſiſts of the Advantages of it, above all other Studies, as the Objects of Divinity are more excellent than others. And *Firſt,* The Nobleneſs of the Objects makes the ſtudy delightful. A Famous Philoſopher being asked what he was born for, anſwered, *To contemplate the Sun,* and it muſt be much more Noble to contemplate the Author of it, a Man's

End

End and Happineſs conſiſting in employing his Nobleſt Faculties on the moſt worthy Objects. And as the Soul is the Seat of Happineſs, the Operations of her Faculties muſt contribute to it; and as the Underſtanding is the higheſt Faculty of the Mind, ſo the ſublimeſt Objects afford it the greateſt Pleaſures. And though ſome allow the Will a greater ſhare in Felicity, than the Intellect, yet the greateſt Number allow the ſuperiour Faculty of the Soul the preeminence. And in the Study of Divinity, the Infinite Goodneſs of God, being an Object of a Chriſtian's Contemplations, as well as the other Perfections of God, excite ſuch an ardent Love of God, and ſuch joyful Affections and vertuous Diſpoſitions, that ſome have been inclined to think, that Happineſs was chiefly ſeated in the Will.

The Pleaſure of this ſtudy like that in Heaven.

But to proceed to conſider further the Advantages of this Study; the Diſcovery of God and his Myſteries, are ſo like the Pleaſures and Happineſs in Heaven, that they ſeem only to differ in Degree. Our Saviour ſays, the Angels ſhall *continually ſee the Face of his Father, who is in Heaven*, and to expreſs the Celeſtial Joys of them that deny themſelves ſenſual Pleaſures, he ſays, *Bleſſed are the pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee God, Mat.* 5.8 And as *Ariſtotle* ſays, the Soul becomes what it contemplates. St. *Paul* and St. *John* tell us, that God is an Object that will transform us, for in Heaven *we ſhall be like him* (ὅτι) *becauſe we ſhall ſee him as he is.* 1 *John* 3.2. And though other Joys will concur to the Felicity of another World, yet the Felicity of Divine Objects will make a great part of that hap-

py State. The Angels are tranſported with Wonder and Joy, when they contemplate God, and conſider his Wiſdom, Juſtice and other Attributes; and the tranſcendent Excellency of the Object made *Carteſius* ſay, *Med. tertia ſub finem; ſed priuſquam hoc diligentius examinem, ſimulq; in alias veritates quæ inde colligi poſſint, inquiram, placet hic aliquandiu in ipſius Dei contemplatione immorari, ejus attributa apud me expendere, & immenſi hujus Luminis pulchritudinem, quantum caligantis Ingenii mei acies ferre poterit, intueri, admirari, adorare. Ut enim in hac ſola Divinæ Majeſtatis contemplatione ſummam alterius Vitæ felicitatem conſiſtere fide credimus; ita etiam jam ex eadem, licet multo minus perfecta, maximam, cujus in hac vita, capaces ſimus voluptatem, percipi poſſe experimur.*

The Senſe of performing the Duty an addition to Happineſs.

But as the Nobleneſs of the Subject may afford a great deal of Contentment; ſo the Senſe of a Man's performing his Duty is another part of his Satisfaction. To this end, though the Subjects themſelves were not excellent and delightful, yet the inward ſatisfaction of a Man's Conſcience will reliſh the biteereſt Pills, like the Wood that grew by the Waters of *Marah*, which ſweetened that which before was diſtaſteful. The Antient Heroes of Vertue guided by their Natural Reaſon, and Inward Principles, thought the moſt troubleſom Duties pleaſant becauſe Duties. And to deny ſome Appetites is as difficult as to *pluck out the right Eye, or to cut off the right Hand, Mat.* 5.29, 30. yet even Ladies have denyed themſelves the greateſt Pleaſures of their Senſes; and loſt their Lives rather than forfeit their Chaſtity. To this Duty

Duty the Dictates of Gratitude as well as Obedience oblige us; which have ſo powerful an Effect on ingenuous Minds, that without the Principles of Religion to elevate them, they have undergone the greateſt hardſhips and hazards, as if advantages, to ſhew their Gratitude to their Parents or their Country; and a grateful Perſon hath the greateſt ſatisfaction, in the moſt difficult acknowledgments of a Favour, and more than he had in receiving it.

The Improvement of Piety and Vertue another Advantage.

Another advantage of the Study of Divinity is, the Improvement of Piety and Vertue; for as the Goſpel is the *Myſtery of Godlineſs*, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. ſo what it teaches is, *The Truth which is according to Godlineſs*, *Tit.* 1. 1. fit to promote Piety and Vertue. So this Character may be given to the ſpeculations of the more retired Truths, as well as the more obvious Ones. We ſay not this to diminiſh the Excellency of Fundamentals; but ſince the nobleſt engagements to Piety and Vertue, are a high Veneration for God and Chriſt, thoſe Enquiries, that make a greater Diſcovery of his Attributes, the Nature, Offices, and Life of our Saviour, tend to increaſe our Admiration, and Love for the Poſſeſſors of ſuch Excellences, and the Authors of ſuch Benefits. And as the Brazen Serpent, a Type of the Goſpel Myſteries, recovered thoſe that looked upon it. *Numb.* 21. 9. So the Myſteries in Scripture have always had a good Effect on the Contemplators of them; but he that hath a deeper Knowledg of God's Wiſdom and Goodneſs, will more admire, and love, and truſt in him; which diſ-

poſition of Mind is a great Part of the Worſhip of God, and promotes thoſe Vertues, without which we can neither Obey God, nor manifeſt our Love to him. And this high eſteem for God and his Truths, will not only aſſiſt us in our way to Heaven, but make us more happy when we come there.

An Objection conſidered.

But it may be ſaid, that the improving the Mind is but a Moral Advantage, but as it is an Intellectual Improvement, it may well deſerve our ſtudy and induſtry, as well as Natural Philoſophy. *Epicurus* ſtudied to know the Natural Cauſes of Thunder and Lightning, to free himſelf from the common Apprehenſions, that they proceeded from an incenſed Deity, and thus diſturbed the Mind as well as the Air; whence it appears, that his Opinion was, that a Moral Advantage having Relation to the Government of the Affections, may encourage us to enquire into Nature. And if a Philoſopher thought it worth his while to take ſo much Pains to move a troubleſom Affection of the Mind, fear; it muſt needs be worth our while to purſue a ſtudy, which will not only ſubdue a great many Vices, but advance all Vertues, and free us from the fears of a Deity; looking upon God's Power, not with Terrour but with Hope and Joy.

The ſtudy of Divinity affords comfort in Afflictions.

Another advantage of the Study of Divinity is, that it affords us Conſolation, whilſt we live in this *Vale of Tears*, and are ſubject to Afflictions. Indeed, Natural Speculations afford pleaſing Diverſions and Noble Employments for the Mind; and Afflictions, by due Attention to ſuch Studies, may be diverted; but ſharper Afflictions,

flictions, eſpecially at the hour of Death, require other kind of Diverſions. For the Mind is too much indiſpoſed for Phyſical Speculations, and few care to ſtudy the World, when they are ready to depart from it, and likely to loſe the Objects of their Contemplation. to will contribute but little to check the Heat of a Fever, or to eaſe the Gripes in the Cholick, to know, *that three Angles of a Triangle are equal to two right Angles*; or that Heat is not a real Quality, but a Modification of the Motion of the Parts of Matter; and that Pain is not inherent in the things that produce it, but only an Affection of the Senſory. And indeed ſuch Diverſions rather amuſe the Mind, and divert it from leſs Evils, than remove them, having the Effects of Opiats rather than Cordials. But in the Study of Divinity, as the Act or Exerciſe of Reaſon, being employed out of Obedience, Gratitude and Love to God, and is acceptable to him, and a proper means to obtain his Favour, whoever enjoys that can ſcarce be miſerable in Affliction; for not to mention the Benefits of Afflictions to them that Love God, and thoſe that are loved by him, it is enough that he who knows *our frame*, *Pſal.* 103. 14. and hath promiſed, that thoſe that are his ſhall not be *heavy-Loaden*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. affording Comforts to his afflicted Servants. For though Natural Philoſophy, like the Stars, afford pleaſure to the Aſtronomer; yet it is not able to to relieve a Man in Neceſſity or in Sickneſs, having only the Effects of a Natural Agent; whereas God Almighty being a free Agent can relieve our heavieſt Afflictions with proportio-

nable Conſolations, ſo that inſtead of Surmounting our Patience, they rather excite our Joy; and when *the King of Terrors* appears in view, *Job* 18. 14. Though a Naturaliſt expects to looſe the pleaſure of his Knowledg as well as his Senſes, and to part with the World which hath the Objects of it, and expects either to be confined for ever in the Grave, or what is worſe expoſed to Torments and Eternal Miſery; the pious Searcher of Truths, is free from the Apprehenſions of anihilation or being caſt into Hell, and is full of the Comfortable Expectation of much greater happineſs than he had in his delightful ſtudies, ſince what ſtrikes terrour into others, makes him rejoyce, that he ſhall be ſo much nearer the Object of his Curioſity, his Faculties being enlarged to give him a clearer Apprehenſion of them.

Eternal Happineſs another Motive to Eternal Felicity.

Another Advantage of the Study of Divinity is, the hopes here, and the fruition hereafter, of Eternal Felicity, which is the higheſt Advantage that can recommend any Study; for as admiring the Nature and Providence of God, and contemplating the Myſteries of Religion, are the greateſt Homages and Services, by which we can venerate and obey God, ſo the recompence is proportionable *viz.* the Enjoyment of himſelf; Saints and Angels have been Meſſengers of the Truths of Divinity; and they have been ſollicitous to dive into *thoſe Sacred Myſteries*; and God hath ſaid, that thoſe who employ themſelves in ſuch ſtudies here, ſhall practice the ſame in Heaven; and the attainment of the Knowledg of Divine things, which we ſo earneſtly purſued here, will be one of thoſe

those inexpressible Joys of Heaven. For those things which we most eagerly desire here, and invite our Industry and Curiosity, will have far greater Influence; for those Lusts and Passions which have hindered us from discerning, or diverted us from considering the Beauty of Divine Truths, will be then either taken away or transfigured; and as the object approaches, our Eyes will be opened, and our Faculties enlarged; and then we shall both admire and discover the sublime and radiant Splendor of those Truths, which will increase our Satisfaction; for Divinity like Heaven is fuller of Stars, than we can discern. And as *Telescopes* did not place the Stars they discovered in the Milky way and other bright Parts of Heaven; so our Saviour at his Resurrection, when he instructed the Apostles to teach the Gospel, altered not the Scriptures of *Moses* and the *Prophets*, but opened their Intellects, *that they might understand the Scriptures*, Luke 24. 45. And the *Psalmist*, *Psal.* 109. 18. prays *that God would be pleased to open his Eyes, that he might see wonderful Things out of the Law.* Knowing the Wonderful things contained in the Scriptures, were his Eyes but able to discern them.

Our Endeavour after Divine Truths sufficient to gain the reward.

Another advantage of this Study is, that though the attainment of the Knowledge be not absolutely necessary, yet our Endeavours after it will be sufficient. He that hath spent an Estate, to seek that Idolized Elixir, the Philosophers Stone, is as poor in Effect, as he is rich in Expectation; and the Husbandman after a great deal of Toil and Seed sown, is frustrated of his Hopes, by an unkind Season.

——*longisq; perit Labor irritus Annis.*

And the Endeavours of the Physitian often end in Death, instead of a Recovery; and a great many famous Writers, after a great deal of Pains to square the Circle, and double the Cube, have not only met with disappointment, but with disgrace. And notwithstanding the Pains to find out Longitude, and to make certain Astrological Predictions, their Endeavours have proved useless. But God *that made the World, and all things therein, and is Lord of Heaven and Earth*, seeks not our Services as if he *wanted any thing, seeing he giveth Life and Breath, and all things.* For in our Obedience he seeks to reward us; prescribing us Services suitable to our Rational Nature, which may prevail with his Justice to make us happy. Thus *Abraham* is said to have *been Justified by Faith, when he offered his Son* Isaac *upon the Altar*, James 11. 21. God graciously accepting the Will for the Deed, and the Blood of a Ram, instead of his Sons. And though *Solomon*, and not *David*, built the Temple at *Jerusalem* God said to the later, *for as much as it was in thy Heart to build a House for my Name, thou didst well in that it was in thy Heart; notwithstanding thou shalt not build the House*, &c. 2 Chron. 6. 9. and 2 Sam. 7. *David* declaring his Will to build God a House, the Almighty Honoured him as once he did *Moses*, with the Title of his Servant, *ver.* 5. and bid the Prophet say to him, *Also the Lord tells thee, that he will make thee an House*, ver. 2 God accepting his Intentions. And since the Designs

and

and Endeavours are ours, and the Events are in Gods Hands, Providence will not ſuffer us to be Loſers by our Endeavours, either Crowning them with ſucceſs, or ſome other recompence. If we conſider that God's Goodneſs is over all his Works, *Heb.* 1. 13. and that his *Purer Eyes* puniſh, as well as diſcern Murder and Adultery even in the Heart, we need not doubt but he will recompence pious Attempts. Our Saviour ſays, bleſſed are they *that Hunger and Thirſt after Righteouſneſs*, *Mat.* 5. 6. for they ſhall be *ſatisfyed*; ſo that a deſire after Spiritual Grace may entitle a Man to the Poſſeſſion of it, tho' not in this Life, in the World to come; where we ſhall not *walk by Faith*, but by Sight. 2 *Cor.* 5. 7. acquiring endowments fit for ſo glorious a State, where we ſhall be equal to Angels.

From what hath been ſaid it appears, that the Study of Divinity is both Noble and Eligible upon ſeveral Accounts. We ſhall next ſhew, that the Study of Philoſophy is attended with ſeveral diſadvantagious Circumſtances, and much below the Excellences of Theological Truths.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Containing the ſecond Part of the Excellency of Theology, or the Pre-eminency of the Study of Divinity, above that of Natural Philoſophy.

THough the Study of Natural Philoſophy is able to afford more Pleaſures, than what Mankind is generally fond of, and is apt to divert Men from the Study of Divinity, yet that is far from being equal to the ſatisfaction that the Study of Divinity affords one that can reliſh Divine Contemplations. This will appear, if we conſider, that the Study of *Phyſiology* is attended with conſiderable Inconveniences; and that the Study of it may be enjoyed by a Perſon ſtudious in Divinity.

A Caution to be conſidered.

But before I proceed to this Part of the Diſcourſe, it may be requiſite to take notice, that perhaps it may be ſaid, that what I have offered to leſſen the Delightfulneſs of Phyſick, the ſame things may be ſaid of Divinity; but this Objection will be eaſily anſwered, by conſidering, that in the foregoing Part of this Diſcourſe, we have ſhewn, that the Study of Divinity is attended with ſeveral Advantages, which reſpectively or principally belong to it: We ſhall now ſhew, whether the Advantages of Philoſophy are equal to the Advantages of the Study of Divinity.

And

And ſince what we have ſaid of the Excellency of the Study of Divinity, is chiefly grounded upon the Advantages peculiar to it, it would appear, that what is ſaid is in vain, tho' the Delightfulneſs of that Study as well as it's Certainty ſhould be lyable to ſome Objections; ſince theſe are not the only Excellences that recommend it; and therefore though the Delightfulneſs of that Study and alſo of Phyſicks hath equal Inconveniences and Imperfections, yet that would not alter the peculiar advantages of Divinity; for tho' Philoſophy hath it's Excellences, yet not of ſo high a Nature as Divinity. *The ſtudy of Divinity and Phyſicks not to be compared.*

But to proceed to ſhew the Delightfulneſs of Phyſicks; the Knowledg of Phyſiology, as taught in the Schools, as it is eaſily attained, affords but little ſatisfaction; and Experimental Philoſophy, if duly followed, is both a troubleſom and delightful Employment; for a Naturaliſt's Curioſity as well as the Dependency of a great Variety of Objects not only afford him matter of conſideration, but the manner of managing of them, will oblige him to make uſe of ſuch a Number of Mechanick People, which he is obliged to wait upon, with the loſs of his time and frequent Diſappointments, which drudgery does in a great meaſure abate the Delightfulneſs of the Study; ſo much care and time is ſpent in the *Apparatus* of an Experiment. And tho' the Event be often ſuch as will pleaſe you, yet you perhaps cannot acquieſce in it; for ſtudying the Books of Nature is not like reading *Æſop*'s Fables, or reading a Collection of Apologues, which have no dependance on one another, *The Advantages of Phyſicks conſidered.*

ther, where you may read as you pleaſe and underſtand them as you read them, without conſulting one to explain the other: But in the Books of Nature, the Parts have a dependance and connection on one another; and the things that follow, are ſo little underſtood by thoſe that preceded, that the whole is requiſite to ſatisfie the Mind, it being till then uneaſy and impatient, and likely to be ſo, the end perhaps never being to be diſcovered in this Life; for there is ſuch a Relation betwixt the Effects of Bodies upon one another, that we are not preſently to draw Concluſions, whether a Truth is diſcovered, or an Error is detected; for it perhaps may not have been ſo skilfully made in all Circumſtances, as to give the deſired ſatisfaction. And though the Hiſtorical Part be no ways defective, there are many Caſes, where the propoſed *Phænomena*, may as well raiſe doubts, as offer new *Phænomena*. And when real Diſcoveries are made, Phyſical Truths and Natural Bodies have ſuch a Connection on one another, and give ſuch hopes to the explicating of other Difficulties, or making further Diſcoveries, that a Naturaliſt daily finds new Employment; his paſt Toils engaging him to new ones, to clear Scruples or to improve Succeſs; ſo that, though Diſcoveries afford a great deal of Pleaſure, yet they carry anxious Thoughts and diſquieting Curioſity along with them. Thus though Knowledg is the Aliment of the Soul, it carries along with it ſuch Qualities, that it ſharpens inſtead of ſatisfying the Appetite.

But

The ſtudy of Divinity improves Philoſophy.

But though a great many Circumſtances leſſen the Value of Phyſiological Studies, yet the Study of Divinity does not hinder an Inquiſitive Man from purſuing the other, but rather makes it more pleaſant; for ſuch a Naturaliſt conſiders not the Works of Nature as ſuch only, but with Honour and Love to the Author. *Rehoboam* had, no doubt, more ſatisfaction in beholding the Temple King *Solomon* his Father built, than a ſtranger had; and had we the Honour to be Sons of Princes or Subjects, we ſhould have more Honour for and Satisfaction in their Heroick Actions, than if we were only Foreigners to them. And no doubt but it is a great deal of Satisfaction, that we diſcover, the Wiſdom and Power of the Author of Nature, whom we have ſo much Intereſt in; and that we can be admitted both into the Number of his Friends and adopted into the Number of his Sons, and are thereby concerned in the Admirations and Praiſes due to the excellent Attributes of that great Author of things; and as theſe Divine Perfections are more plainly diſcovered, the Contemplation become more delightful; as an excellent Picture is more delightful than an ordinary one, and the Picture of a charming Beauty to a paſſionate Lover, which makes him admire it, not only as a fine piece, but as it is like his Miſtreſs; and gives him a greater Idea of the beloved Original, to whoſe Excellences the Nobleſt Repreſentations muſt be moſt like.

And our Contemplator hath the greater ſatisfaction in theſe Diſcoveries. There being ſo much Imperfection in our Nature, and ſuch a Diſpoſition to ſelf-Love, that we are too apt to eſtimate,

mate, what God can do for us, by what he hath done. And though we may enlarge our Apprehenſions, and raiſe our Expectations beyond the uſual pitch, they will but be indifferently promoted or heightened, if thoſe things we are ſatisfyed to ſurpaſs are in themſelves but mean. One that is born but in a mean Habitation, can but have mean apprehenſions of the Magnificence of a great Monarch's Court; and if he ſhould endeavour to form Ideas, they muſt only be borrowed from the thoughts he hath of the beſt Gentleman's Seat he is acquainted with, where he hath ſold Turneps, or hath perhaps been at the Wedding of ſome Farmer's Daughter: And though a Child in the Womb had the Uſe of his Reaſon, he could have but an indifferent Idea of the Sun or Moon, or of Beauties, Banquets, Algebra or Chymiſtry, which thoſe that are elder, and in the open Light might hope to enjoy. Now Men who are inclined to think of a future State, which they muſt ſoon enter upon, and never paſs out of, will be apt to be diſtruſtful; and though ſeldom owned, their Thoughts will be uneaſy enough. For ſuch Men are apt to queſtion, whether they ſhall have ſo much Happineſs for the future as the Goſpel promiſes; ſince they ſhall only contemplate the Works of God in Heaven, and praiſe and converſe with him, which they think may be done on Earth without Felicity; but he who by purſuing the Arts of Anatomy, Chymiſtry, *&c.* and makes Obſervations with Teleſcopes, and Microſcopes, and thus obſerves the wonderful Skill and Power of the Great Contriver of ſo curious a piece of Work as the World, will

will take a pleaſure in being convinced of the Power and Goodneſs of that admirable Architect. And if we conſider, how wonderfully Man is formed, and how the Parts are ſuited to different States, whether before Birth or after it, it will not only give us Reaſon, but invite us to conclude, that God who hath ſo wonderfully contrived Silkworms, Butterflies and other Inſects, and hath taken care, that other Creatures ſhould be compleatly perfect according to their Natures, and can furniſh other Creatures with Qualifications different from what we find in the reſt, may furniſh whom he pleaſes with Objects ſuitable to their Faculties, and requiſite for a glorifyed State; which may be brought about by ſuch extraordinary Methods, that nothing that we have yet ſeen may ſuggeſt us any Ideas of. And he who hath made ſuch extraordinary Proviſion for thoſe who are very wicked, or perhaps but indifferently good, in a State, where Happineſs cannot be enjoyed, but are to be fitted for it by Obedience and Sufferings, may very well be truſted to find them Imployments and Delights, worthy the Happineſs allotted them there; ſince we ſee, that here he provides for the ſmalleſt Inſect as well as for the ſoaring Eagle. And as the Joys of Heaven is ſo great a Happineſs, that whatever gives us aſſurance of them, may be eſteemed the greateſt advantages, that we can enjoy without it, ſo thoſe are moſt likely to enjoy this Happineſs, who look into the manifold Wiſdom of God, and have their Underſtandings moſt elevated and enlarged. Thus the Queen of *Sheba* thought King *Solomon*'s Servants more happy than the

the greateſt Monarch, when ſhe ſaw the good Order and Magnificence of his Court, which they conſtantly enjoyed the Privilege of attending him.

Whether Phiſiology be to be preferred before other kinds of Knowledg.

But thoſe who prefer the ſtudy of Philoſophy before all other kinds of Knowledg, may perhaps urge, that it may be applied to the promoting of Trades, and Phyſick it ſelf, which indeed are advantages next to thoſe which aſſiſt Men to be juſt and grateful, to the Author of Nature and of Man; ſo that though it may be ſerviceable to Mankind to ſtudy Phyſiology, yet Divinity is much more advantagious, ſubduing Mens Luſts and Paſſions; which contributes to preſerve the Health, as much; thoſe being as deſtructive to ſome, as Wars, Duels, *&c.* Diſeaſes occaſioned by Gluttony and Drunkenneſs being both Phyſical and Moral Enemies to Man's Life and Health, bringing down Temporal as well as Spiritual Judgments; as Plagues, Wars, *&c.* which deſtroy a great many, as well as bodily ſickneſs and diſquietneſs of Conſcience, which ſhorten Mens Lives, as well as make them uneaſy. Whereas Piety entitles us both to Bleſſings in this Life and that which is to come, Vertue and Religion making Men Temperate, Chaſt, Calm, and Inoffenſive, which procures them Excellent Diſpoſitions to thoſe Bleſſings which are beſtowed upon ſuch as are made fit to receive them; and likewiſe by preſerving the Body in Temperance both lengthens their Lives, and ſweetens them.

Divine Advantages more Noble and Durable.

But Divine Advantages excel thoſe of a Naturaliſt, both in their Nobleneſs, and Duration; for though a Naturaliſt may both be improved by

by Phyſicks and Trades; yet Natural Philoſophy by promoting theſe, only ſerve the Body, which is but the Inſtrument of the Soul, and far from being the Nobleſt Part of Man. And tho' Experimental Philoſophy by making Improvements in Mechanical Arts is beneficial both to States and private Perſons; yet many of theſe rather transfer than increaſe their Goods, and are as prejudicial to ſome Men as they are beneficial to others; as the *Portugueſe* and *Dutch*, by appropriating to themſelves the Eaſtern Spices, deprived the *Venetians*; or elſe they increaſe that which is only beneficial to the Producers, and not to Mankind in General; of this kind is the extracting of Gold and Silver out of the Ore with Mercury, which though it enriched the *Spaniards* in the *Weſt Indies* is of no ſolid advantage to the World, no more than the Mines of *Peru* and *America*, which have made ſeveral Men unhappy in the working of them. And the Diſcovery of the Philoſopher's Stone would be but of little Service in tranſmuting of Metals, were it not uſeful as a Medicine, there being Gold and Silver enough to maintain Trade and Commerce: beſides I know not why a Plenty of Iron, Braſs and Quickſilver ſhould not be more deſireable as they are more uſeful Metals. But further, theſe Advantages of enriching Trade are chiefly ſo to the Outward Man; and thoſe Arts which tend only to advance the Pleaſures of the Senſes, only reſpect the Body, and as they only gratify thoſe, are not of ſo much Importance, Education and Cuſtom having a greater Intereſt than ſome imagin, in the reliſh of ſenſative Pleaſures. And as for the Improvements of Phy-

ſick, Philoſophy hath been complained of, but with what Reaſon we ſhall not here examin; yet ſince Phyſick only ſerves to reſtore or preſerve Health, there are a great many, who need not a Naturaliſt to aſſiſt a Phyſitian; and a healthful Man is already in a worſe Condition than a Philoſopher could put him in, being no more advantaged by the Philoſophers help, than a Man that is ſound is by the Surgeon's Tools, and the Compoſitions in his Cheſt.

And as the Advantages afforded by Divinity are much greater than thoſe afforded by Phyſicks in reſpect of the Nobleneſs of the Subject they reſpect, ſo they do in their Duration; for all the Advantages of Medicines, Inſtruments and other Improvements only reſpect this Life, and determin with it; though Phyſick and Chymiſtry by contributing to the Cure of Diſeaſes may be ſaid to prolong Life; yet *Solomon* and *Helmont* lived not longer than Millions, who knew nothing of Philoſophy; and *Paracelſus* for all his boaſted *Arcana*, is ſaid not to live to Fifty: So that we may juſtly fear, that that Debt will not be long deferred which all Men owe; and if by a troubleſom Diet and the Uſe of Medicines, it ſhould be protracted for a few Years, yet that in reſpect of Eternity is inconſiderable. And as the Advantages which Philoſophical Improvements afford, will not ſecure a Man from the Grave, the advantages received by Divinity will follow us into the other World; ſo that Philoſophy only affords us Conveniency in our Paſſage, but Religion provides us a durable Eſtate; and therefore it's Benefits are more durable and to be preferred.

But

But in favour of the Study of Phyſicks, it may be offered as a great Excellency, and add to it's Delightfulneſs, that it carries ſo much certainty and clearneſs along with it; whereas Divine Truths are more dark and uncertain. But to determin this we are to conſider, *Firſt*, as to the Fundamental and neceſſary Articles of Religion, they appear to be both evident and capable of a moral Demonſtration; but there are many which will not admit of a Rational Proof, but ſuch are not abſolutely neceſſary to be believed; for ſince God hath ſent his Prophets and Apoſtles as well as his only Son into the World to teach the Chriſtian Religion, and not only to commit it to Writing, but to confirm it by Miracles, to do which he altered the Courſe of Nature, no doubt but he expreſſed thoſe Truths with as much clearneſs as was requiſite to render them clear to ſtudious Readers; a moral Certainty being ſufficient to convince a Wiſe Man or a Philoſopher in ſome Caſes; and Phyſical Certainty, which is eſteemed Proof by a Naturaliſt is but as inferiour Certainty as Moral; for Phyſical Demonſtrations can but make Phyſical Certainty, and not a Metaphyſical one. All the Phyſical Demonſtrations of the Antients of the Cauſes of particular *Phænomena* ſuppoſe, that *ex nihilo nihil fit*, no body being to be produced out of Nothing in a Phyſical Senſe; but in a Chriſtian Senſe it cannot be true, all things being made out of Nothing. And though as *Epicurus* aſſerts, a Body once dead cannot be made alive again, it's Atoms being diſperſed, in a Phyſical manner, yet by the Intervention of God's Omnipotence it may be done; as we know

Whether Phyſical or Divine Truths have more clearneſs and uncertainty.

that *Lazarus* was raiſed from the Dead. But to affirm, that Contradictories cannot be true, or *factum infectum reddi non poſſit* are Metaphyſical Truths and Certainty. And *Carteſius* knew, that Phyſical Demonſtrations, depended ſo much upon Metaphyſical Truths, that he would not allow Certainty to them, nor Geometrical Demonſtrations 'till he had proved, that there is a God, and that Men cannot be deceived, that make Uſe of their Faculties right.

Phyſical Demonſtrations but Moral Certainties.

And in many things, which are looked upon as Phyſical Demonſtrations, the Certainty is but moral; for when Philoſophers offer to prove, that ſeveral Comets are not Meteors, their Paralax being leſs than that of the Moon, and that they are of ſuch a Bigneſs, and move in ſuch a Line, ſuch Men never ſaw a Comet, but take the Circumſtances upon the Credit of ſuch as had obſerved them; and though the Inference may have a demonſtrable, the Premiſes had but an Hiſtorical Certainty, which Phyſico-Mathematical Demonſtration can produce but moral Certainty, and that not of the greateſt kind, it being difficult to make exact Obſervations about ſuch nice Subjects, ſufficient to build a certain Theory upon; and there are a great many Arguments in Phyſicks looked upon as valid, which have but moral Certainty; of which we ſhall offer the following Inſtances. And *firſt*, we are ſo conſtantly ſurrounded with Corporeal Subſtances, which ſo many ways affect our Senſes, that we cannot enquire into the Nature of particular Bodies to know them, nor into their Properties; and yet the Notion of Body in general, or what a Corporeal Subſtance is, and how

how different from other things, hath often been diſputed and yet remains undetermined. *Carteſius* indeed makes the Nature of a Body to conſiſt in extenſion, which is lyable to Inconveniences, ſince if any portion of Matter ſhould be anihilated, the ſpace it poſſeſſed will have the three Dimenſions; ſo that as one Particle of Matter is anihilated another is created. Nor will this Notion of a Corporeal Subſtance ſolve the Difficulties of that Controverſy *de Compoſitione Continui* better than any other. And though the Explication of this Controverſy is looked upon as unneceſſary, and it is thought that Natural Philoſophy may be advanced without the Deciſion of it, yet till the Difficulties are cleared the Notion of Body muſt be very obſcure. For either a Corporeal Subſtance is diviſible into Parts, which have Extenſion, *ad Infinitum*, or the Subdiviſion muſt ſtop ſomewhere; and either way the Opinion will be lyable to Objections, if not Abſurdities

The Nature of Body, but little known either with or without our Senſes.

But though the Nature of Body is not underſtood in general, yet we cannot but obſerve what is evident to our Senſes, when we See, Hear, Smell, Taſte or Touch. But as we know but little without, ſo we know but little by the information of our Senſes; for ſuppoſing with *Carteſius* a Man's Body to be a well Organized Statue, Senſation is produced by the Mind, perceiving the Motion produced in the Organ, ſo that he diſallows Brutes to have ſenſation at all; and to produce ſenſation in the Soul of Man, which he allows to be an Immaterial Subſtance, outward Objects make their Impreſſions on our Senſes, by variouſly moving

the fibres of the Nerves; which Motion is conveighed to that ſmall Gland in the Brain called *Conarion*, where theſe Motions being perceived by the Soul reſiding there, become Senſations, the Soul being intimately mixed with the Body. But it is ſo difficult to apprehend, how anIncorporeal and a Corporeal Subſtance are united together, that it ſeems as abſtruſe as the Doctrin of the Incarnation it ſelf; it being hard to conceive how an Immaterial Subſtance ſhould be united without a Phyſical Medium, to a Body which cannot lay hold of it, and from which it muſt part at Death: and it is as difficult to conceive how any Part of the Body, nay even the Animal Spirits, ſhould make impreſſions upon an Incorporeal Subſtance; and yet is not affected by the Motions of any other Parts of the Body, except the *Genus Nervoſum*. Nor is it leſs difficult to conceive, how a finite Spirit can regulate the Motion of a Body. And tho' the Soul does perceive the Motions communicated by the outward Senſes, yet it will not give us the Reaſon of particular Senſations; for if it be asked, why the Motion of a Bell, produces not the ſenſation of Seeing, as well as Hearing, or why another Motion communicates the *Idea* of Seeing and not of Hearing, the Anſwer muſt be, that it was God Almighty's Will. And if it ſhould be asked about the Objects of any Senſory, as of Sight, why a great Quantity of undiſturbed Light reflected from Snow, rather produces the ſenſation of White, than any other Colour; or why the ſmell of *Caſtor* or *Aſſa fœtida* occaſions a ſtink, rather than any other ſmell, ſince ſome think it a pleaſant ſmell; and

if

if it ſhould be further asked, why Melody and Sweet things are pleaſant, and why Bitter things are unpleaſant; and why a little more of ſome things that are Pleaſant, produce Pain; it muſt be anſwered, that ſuch is the Nature of Man; for to ſay that moderate Motions are more agreeable to the Nature of the Senſory, and that others put it into too violent a Motion for the ſenſory, will by no means be ſatisfactory; It giving no account of the variety of ſenſations, but only of Pleaſure and Pain; nor will it be fully ſatisfactory in thoſe, ſince it appears not how an Immaterial Subſtance can be affected more by a brisk Motion, than an eaſy one.

And though the *Ariſtotelians* ſay, that the Qualities of Bodies ariſe from ſubſtantial Forms, when they are asked Queſtions about theſe incomprehenſible Forms, they can only tell us that they have ſuch Faculties or Effects, which the Author of Nature endowed them with. Which may prevent us from boaſting of the clearneſs of our Knowledg; for as the *Ariſtotelians* cannot tell how their Qualities are produced, ſo we cannot explain how they are perceived; our Perceptions only depending upon a Union of the Soul and Body, which we can give no Account of, but that God was pleaſed to joyn them together. From whence it appears, that the certainty of Phyſicks above Theology, is not ſo great as ſome imagin, ſince we know neither the Definition of a Corporeal Subſtance, nor can give a ſatisfactory Account of Senſation; ſince without the Notion of a Body we cannot know the Object of Phyſicks in General, nor without knowing the Nature of Senſation, can

we know the Foundation of what we know of Body.

Imperfections on our Knowledg attributed to the weakneſs of our Capacities.

But this Imperfection in our Knowledg depends on the weakneſs of human Reaſon; but our imperfect Knowledg in Phyſicks ought not to diſcourage us from the Study of Divinity, which being ſo far diſtant may well have the Obſcurity of the Knowledg of them attributed to the weakneſs of our Underſtandings. And if in this ſtate we are only capable of a dim Knowledg, we are the more obliged to the Chriſtian Religion, ſince it is likely to advance our Nature, and enlarge our Faculties, and give us a degree of Knowledg, which we are now ſtrangers to. Before the Fall, *Adam* is ſaid to have given at the firſt ſight Names ſuitable to their Natures to every Beaſt, yet I could never find, that their *Hebrew* Names gave us a Light into their Natures, more than the Names of thoſe Animals in other Languages: So that *Adam*'s Knowledg in Paradice was not to be compared to the Saints in Heaven, though his Knowledg of *Eve* at the firſt ſight was a greater Argument, than his naming of Beaſts, of his Knowledg: And the Proto-Martyr's ſight was ſtrengthened ſo *as to ſee the Heavens opened, and Jeſus ſtanding at the right hand of God*, *Act.* 7.56. and the Prophet praying, that his Eyes might be opened, he ſaw the Mountain, where they were covered with Chariots and Horſemen, who though of fire, were inviſible to him before, 2 *Kings* 6. 17. That our Knowledg will be enlarged in a future ſtate appears from St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 13.12. *for now we ſee through a Glaſs darkly, but then face to face: Now I know in Part, but then ſhall I know*

even

even as I am known, and 1 *John* 3.2. *Beloved now we are the Sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we ſhall be; but we know that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.*

Other things which recommend the Knowledg of Natural Philoſophy.

But to conſider further, the Certainty we have of the Knowledg of Natural things, is not all that recommends us to them, but the worthyneſs of the Object, the Number of thoſe that are Ignorant of them, the Diſtance from our Capacities, and the Difficulty of acquiring them, without particular advantages, as alſo their Uſefulneſs when attained. No doubt but a Naturaliſt values his Knowledg above that of the Elements of Arithmetick; though the Truth of his Rules and Operations are Demonſtrations: and no doubt but *Copernicus* valued his Syſtem of the Motion or Stability of the Planets, above ſeveral Theorems of the Sphere demonſtrated by *Euclid* and others; and the diſcovery of Comets not being Sublunary Meteors, but Celeſtial Bodies, and the Conjectural Theory about them, are no doubt more entertaining than the knowing of the riſing and ſetting of the Sun, or the ſetting of fixed Stars. And to meaſure the height of Comets by their *Paralaxes*, and of ſome Planets, though uncertain, is more pleaſant, than by a Geometrical Quadrant to meaſure the height of a Tower or Steeple; and a skilful Coſmographer, is much better pleaſed with his Employment, than in meaſuring how many Acres a Field contains, and what Hedges and Ditches encompaſs it. And thus the Knowledg of God, and the Myſteries of Divinity which are Noble and Sublime Objects, and

and which the greateſt part of Learned Men have not obtained, and which not only can improve us here, but render us happy hereafter, muſt be more inviting. To be admitted Privy Counſel to a a great Monarch, and to gueſs at thoſe Thoughts that govern Kingdoms, and give the Fates of Nations, is preferable to the Knowledg a Notary may have of a private Man's Will. And as the Knowledg of a Phyſitian is preferable to the Cutlers, that makes his Diſſecting Knives, ſo the later can more certainly perform, what he propoſes in his own Buſineſs, than the Phyſitian can in his; and as the skill of a Jeweller is prefered before that of a Maſon though the later deals in whole Quarries of Stones, and knows ſeveral things about them, which the Jeweller only knows by Tradition, ſo a dim and imperfect Knowledg of God and his Myſteries may be more deſirable and delightful, than the Knowledg of thoſe Inferior Truths of Phyſicks.

But another advantage that may recommend the Study of Phyſicks to a Divine, is, that as the Contemplation of the Works of Nature, may better qualify him to admire and praiſe their Author, ſo his Studies are delightful, both as they entertain his Reaſon, and procure him a greater ſatisfaction in his Conſcience. And no doubt but *Eſau* whilſt he was hunting, had his pleaſure increaſed to think, that he hunted to pleaſe his Father, and to get a Bleſſing. So *David* in employing his Voice and Inſtruments in praiſing God, had a double ſatisfaction in exerciſing both his Skill and Devotion, and was as much pleaſed with thoſe Melodious Sounds,

as

as they were Hymns, and more than if they were Songs. And a Devout Student of Nature deſigns to improve the Knowledg of the Creatures, to the Glory of the Creator; ſo that the greateſt ſatisfaction of his ſtudies, and what he diſcovers is, to heighten his admiration of the Wiſdom of God, and prepare him better for thoſe Sacrifices of Praiſe, he is ambitious to offer up to the Almighty. And when *David invented new Inſtruments of Muſick, Amos* 6. 5. his greateſt ſatisfaction was, that he could praiſe God the more Melodiouſly, it being the greateſt ſatisfaction to a Divine Student, that the Wonders he meets with, help him to celebrate and glorify the Divine Attributes ſhadowed out in the Creatures.

Being too Proud of Natural Philoſophy apt to occaſion a ſlight of the Study of Theology.

But ſome are ſo proud of their Attainments, that they think they may undervalue all other Learning, even Theology it ſelf; but it will be no prejudice to the ſtudy of Natural Philoſophy to prefer the ſtudy of Theology and ſupernatural Things, or to think that thoſe things which God indifferently expoſes to all Mankind are inferiour to ſuch Myſteries, whoſe Contemplation was deſigned for the moſt curious, and are wonderful to the Angels themſelves. But to repreſent, how much the ſtudy of Divinity is above the ſtudy of Natural Philoſophy, we are to conſider, *firſt*, that it is converſant about more Noble Objects, diſcovering things above the reach of Human Reaſon: Next, whatever may be ſaid in favour of the Pride of thoſe that contrived the Atomical Philoſophy, and *Carteſius*, who improved and altered it; thoſe who have only learned what others taught, have leſs Reaſon

to

to be proud of it; and though ſome are able to confute the Errours of *Ariſtotle*, yet it is not by the ſtrength of their own Reaſoning; but the Truths their Arguments are grounded upon, are the Effects of Time and Chance. Without much Wit, a Man may diſpute for the Habitableneſs of the Torrid Zone, or prove Antipodes, ſince the former have been found inhabited by Navigators, and People have been diſcovered to live on the ſide of the Globe oppoſite to ours. It will be no Argument for Pride, that a Man, now Teleſcopes are invented, can ſhew that other Planets, beſides the Moon, ſhine with a borrowed Light, and that the Galaxy is no Meteor, or that *Venus* hath her Full and Wain as well as the Moon, and that the Galaxy is made of a great many ſmall Stars, which the Naked Eye cannot diſcern. And of thoſe who overthrew the Antient Aſtronomy none hath cauſe to boaſt, except *Galilæus* who invented Teleſcopes: For ſince thoſe are found, it is no difficulty to ſee Mountains in the Moon, or by the Direction of the four *Satellites* of *Jupiter*, to reject the Septercury Number of the Planets, nor to diſcern by a good Glaſs, the Maſts and Sails in a Ship: though *Carteſius* ſays, that Teleſcopes and Perſpectives were firſt found out by one *Metius*, a *Dutch* Spectacle-Maker. And ſeveral Diſcoveries in Phyſicks, are the Productions of Chance; not Philoſophy; by which Gunpowder, & Glaſs were found out, & the Verticity of the Loadſtone, by which the *Indies* were diſcovered: To which we may add the Diſcovery of the Milky Veſſels in the Meſentery, *&c.*

And

And that which may abate the Pride of thoſe Corpuſcular Philoſophers is, that ſuppoſing according to that Hypotheſis, the Univerſe was a great *Automaton*, and all things were to be performed by the Motion or reſt, the ſize, or ſhape, ſcituation and texture of the Parts of Matter, when once theſe Principles are ſetled, thoſe that learn them, in accounting for other *Phænomena*, only gueſs by what kind of Motions theſe three or four Principles are varyed; ſo that conſidering the World as a piece of Clockwork, a Naturaliſt is but a Mechanitian, however the Parts may vary in ſize from thoſe of a Clock; and for a Naturaliſt to undervalue the ſtudy of Divine Truths, is as unreaſonable as for a Watchmaker to deſpiſe a Privy Counſellor, becauſe he underſtands his Trade; or for a Ship Carpenter to undervalue an Admiral, who is acquainted with the Deſigns of his Prince, and employed about the moſt important Affairs.

The Uſefulneſs of the Mechanical Philoſophy conſidered further.

The Illuſtrious Improver of Phyſicks *Verulam* who imployed the moſt Uſeful way to make diſcoveries, confeſſes, that what he did was *partus temporis potius quam ingenii*, and though he ſays his way of Philoſophizing does *exæquare ingenia*, which I diſſent from; yet I think the Principle of the Mechanical Philoſophy being once ſtated, and Phyſico-Mechanical Inſtruments being invented, a Man of Moderate parts may eaſily rectify the Errors of the Schools. And though the contrivance of the Inſtruments may require greater knowledg, yet when he hath got ſuch aſſiſtances, what he does upon that bottom cannot be of ſo high a Rank. And as it might be

be eaſy to overſet the erroneous Doctrin of the Schools, ſo when a way of explaining the *Phænomena* of Nature is found out, and moſt of thoſe that are difficult have been accounted for, it is not ſo difficult to explain the reſt by the ſame *Hypotheſis*, as to clear up ſeveral Theological Truths. And indeed, when Thorems have been once layed down and hints given, to explain the reſt of thoſe *Phænomena* may be delightful, but neither imploys ſo much Sagacity, nor argues ſo much Sublimity of Reaſon as to make a Man proud of it; and ſuch endeavours rather deſerve Thanks and Praiſes than Admiration, which is due to the Founders of ſuch *Hypotheſes*, or the Authors of Uſeful Diſcoveries.

Our Knowledg Shallow and Superficial.

And as our Knowledg is very Shallow and Superficial, ſo it is not very Large, nor able to give us an Account of the Celeſtial or Subterraneal Parts of the World. In reſpect of the Globe, as there are a great many Plants and Animals as well as Minerals, which we know nothing of, ſo thoſe things we are employed about belong only to the Shell or Superficial Part of the Globe, but what is contained within the Globe we know not; ſome think the Internal Parts of the Globe is Elementary Earth; others think it fiery and the Place of Hell; others think the Centre of it a great Magnet; and the *Carteſians* think the Globe was once a fixed Star, and though, degenerated into a Planet, it hath ſtill the ſame Nature, being only covered over with dark Spots, which condenſing, formed the Earth we live on; each of which Opinions are as hard to prove falſe as true; for as it is reckoned Three Thouſand Five Hundred Miles to the Centre

Centre of the Earth, we have not yet been able to penetrate above a Mile or two downwards either into the Earth or Sea. And of thoſe vaſt Luminous Bodies we know much leſs, ſince we cannot be certain of their Bigneſs or Diſtance, there being no Paralaxes obſerved in the fixed Stars to meaſure them by: And the *Copernicans* not only make it ſome Hundred Thouſands of Miles, more than the *Ptolemæans*, but *Ricciolus* makes the Diſtance a great deal greater, each aſſigning a diſtance ſuitable to his Hypotheſis; and as we are not ſure of their Diſtance, ſo we cannot be of their Bulk, ſince their appearing bigger than one another may depend on their being at a greater or leſs Diſtance, or from both their Diſtance and Bigneſs.

Our Knowledg but very ſhallow.

And the Stars are ſo far diſtant from us, that ſeveral things are not ſo much as diſputed, as whether their Number is neither greater nor leſs than it is? Why ſo many are ſo placed, that we can neither diſcern them by the Naked Eye, nor by Teleſcopes? Why there are more in ſome Parts of the Sky than in others? Why of ſuch different ſizes, and yet no more different? Why they are not placed ſo as to make up Conſtellations more handſomly? To which ſeveral Queſtions might be added, as well as of the Interſtellary Part of the Sky, which the *Epicureans* would have to be full, except where the Beams of Light penetrate, whilſt the *Carteſians* believe it to be full of an Æthereal Subſtance. So that our Knowledg is both very ſhort as well as ſhallow; for the diſproportion of the Heavens is ſo great, that ſome think the Earth to be but as a point

point in reſpect of the reſt; and others, that the great Orb it ſelf is but as a Point in compariſon of the Firmament. Nay, we are ignorant of ſo many things relating to the Bodies above us, or below, that our Knowledg ſeems confined to a very ſmall part of that Phyſical Point; and though our Knowledg may highly gratify our Minds, it ought not to make us Proud; nor ought we to value that, ſo as to make us deſpiſe the Knowledg of Spiritual things.

God Almighty the Promoter of the ſtudy of Divinity.

But one thing more we ſhall add, to ſhew the pre-eminence of Divine Studies above others, which is, that it is thought to be ſo by the beſt of Judges, even by God himſelf. Indeed were he that declared in favour of Divine Truths, but moderately acquainted with the Secrets of Phyſicks, or were it an Angel, though not a bare Contemplator of the Works of God, a mere Naturaliſt might have an Excuſe, and a ſtronger Temptation to prefer Phyſicks. But when God himſelf, who made the World, and every thing in it, and perfectly underſtands his Works, directs us to prefer the Study of Divinity, we cannot ſuppoſe, that he does it with a deſign to diſparage Phyſicks, but knows perfectly what ſort of Knowledg we ought to covet and value; but ſince he himſelf recommends that Study above the other, it is no Diſparagement to the Works of his Hands, that we prefer the other Study before it; and though he is to be admired for his viſible Productions, we ought to believe him when he tells of Truths more valuable than thoſe that reſpect the Objects of our Senſes.

But

But ſome prefer the Study of Phyſicks, before that of Divinity, becauſe it affords, as they think, a durable and a more laſting Fame; but though Natural Philoſophy is highly reputable, yet the Study of it cannot ſecure ſuch a laſting Reputation; nor ſhould our Expectations of it, influence Men to undervalue the Study of Divinity; beſides a Naturaliſts acquiring Fame, is liable to more Inconveniences than are incident to Divines. To make this apparent we are to conſider, that a Man muſt either be a writer or forbear to print what he knows, and if a Man thinks to get Reputation without writing his Thoughts he may be eaſily miſtaken. For if he be known to have made Improvements, he will not want Viſits of the Curious; and if he ſhould affect Solitude, he will be courted by Letters; and theſe Methods will not prevail with him; he will provoke thoſe who are defeated of their Deſires and Expectations, who inſtead of a good one will be apt to give him an ill Character, and will be apt to repreſent that he pretends to what he does not know. And if a Man be ingenious in Communicating what he knows, his Notions will be by ſome in danger of being arrogated, and to ſecure their own Reputation will be apt to blemiſh his. And if a Man ſhould talk moderately of his Notions, and conceal ſome Part of them, this is not a ſure way to ſecure them; for moſt Men are ſo opinionative, that they think they know when they do but half underſtand a thing; and if they be told to a Man of Sagacity, he will be apt to make the Notion out, and aſſume it for his own. And if

Reputation got by Philoſophy more hazardous than that by Divinity.

he ſhould not be underſtood, becauſe not willing to explain himſelf fully, or becauſe the hearer does not give due attention, the danger is greater, he being liable to have his Thoughts miſrepreſented, and made guilty of Errors, he is not concerned in; and when his Notions are not well repreſented, he is liable to have Errors and Extravagances imputed to him; and if the Perſon hath reputation, his Notions may be blaſted and ruined. As Fryar *Bacon*, *Paracelſus* and others, who by being repreſented as fearful, all other things ſaid of them were ſaid to be as Fabulous as that Report was.

The Inconveniences of writing Books.

But if a Man to avoid ſuch inconveniences, ſhould write Books, he may fall into hazards as bad or worſe. For whether a Man writes Syſtematically, publiſhing Bodies of Natural Philoſophy, or Methodical Treatiſes of ſome parts, or of any particular ſubject belonging to Phyſicks, Inconveniences will attend him. If he writes Syſtematically, he will be obliged to ſay ſomething that hath been ſaid before, which may be ingrateful to the Reader. Beſides, there are ſo many things we know nothing of, and others of which we know ſo little, that he will be obliged to leave ſeveral things untreated of, or will be apt to write ſlightly or erroneouſly. Beſides, Natural Philoſophy is ſo fruitful a Subject, that every day diſcovers ſomething new about it, ſo that a method ſuited only to what is known, can never laſt long proper. And therefore new Syſtems may be made more adequate than the former. And though little new were to be added, and it were more eaſie to alter than to mend what had been ſaid, yet Novelty is ſo inviting,

inviting, that often that alone is ſufficient to recommend them; and ſometimes, as they ſay of Miſtreſſes, another is preferable to a better. And if a Man write looſe Tracts, he will be plundered by Syſtematical writers, who will take what they like and place it to their own advantage more than his. And ſuch Methodical Books commonly promiſe ſo much Compendiouſneſs, that they rather help the Memory than the Underſtanding; and moſt will be apt to think, that the later writer hath taken what was requiſite, and hath orderly digeſted, what he hath extracted. And though this may be an Erroneous way, yet it prevails ſo much, that as Goldſmiths, who only give Shape and Luſtre, are eſteemed more than Refiners who take pains to dig up the Oar and refine the Metal, ſo thoſe that take pains to make Diſcoveries and penetrate into the Secrets of Nature, are commonly leſs regarded, than thoſe who by plauſible Methods, and a good Style, reduce what others diſcovered into convenient Syſtems, of a fit Bulk. But further, as the Method, ſo the Bulk of Books may be prejudicial to the Authors Fame; for if Books be large, they may be unaccurate, and a great many things muſt be repeated, which have been ſaid before. And if the Books are ſmall, the Author having a Mind to publiſh nothing but what is new and conſiderable, as the Excellency will ſoon diſperſe them, ſo the ſmallneſs of their Bulk will ſoon make them be loſt, and hard to be met with; ſo that in a little time they are either forgot, or their Memory is only preſerved in other Men's Writings; who have more Induſtry than

Judgment in chuſing what is beſt, and thus an Author may be miſrepreſented for want of Judgment in the Compiler.

Want of Judgment in Quoting, oft prejudicial to Writers.

And want of Judgment often prejudices the Author who is cited, being either miſrepreſented by miſtake or deſign, ſome delivering their Opinions in a quite different Senſe. Some Authors Writings have been traduced out of hatred to their Perſons or Religion, as if Truth would not be acceptable from an Enemy; or an Error in Religion would leſſen the value of a Philoſophical Notion: Nay, ſome will cry down a Mans writings becauſe he is an Enemy to their Friend, though none of theirs, or becauſe he is eſteemed by their Enemies: and further, a Man's writings may be prejudiced by one that deſigned to honour him, ſome praiſing an Author for one thing they have quoted from him, that they may diſguiſe what elſe they have ſtole from him that is better; which is more ingenuous than to rail at an Author which they are obliged to.

Other Occaſions of the declining Repute of Learning.

But beſides theſe Inconveniences that may endanger a Naturaliſts Reputation, it is liable to other hazards depending on the Nature of Men, Opinions and Things. And *Firſt*, Mens Genius's and Inclinations differ in reſpect of Studies, their Opinions being determined often likewiſe by external and accidental Cauſes. As when a Conſiderable Perſon is a Promoter or Diſcourager of particular kinds of Learning; and when one hath gained much applauſe by one kind of Study, others apply themſelves to it in imitation or emulation. Thus the Reputation of *Cicero* and the Encouragement of *Auguſtus*

guſtus brought Learning into requeſt, whereas the ſmall Encouragement amongſt ſucceeding Emperors made it leſs flouriſhing amongſt the Greeks than in *Alexander*'s Time. And in the Decay of the Roman Empire, Natural Philoſophy and Mathematicks were much diſcouraged, Men's Genius being inclined to other Studies, ſo that no Improvements were made for above a Hundred Years in Mathematicks or Phyſicks: So that the certainty of Reputation is but ſmall, ſince the Science it ſelf may loſe it's Repute. Another Inconveniency to the Study of Philoſophy is the different Eſtimates Men may make of *Hypotheſes*, Sects and Ways of Philoſophizing; for before *Ariſtotle*, all the Philoſophers were Corpuſcularians, endeavouring tho' different ways to account for the *Phænomena* of Nature, and Qualities of Bodies, by their Bigneſs, Shape, Motion, *&c.* of the Minute Parts of Matter. Whereas *Ariſtotle* endeavoured to deduce them from the four firſt Qualities, aſcribing what could not be explained by them to occult Qualities and Subſtantial Forms, Principles eaſily named, but hard to be underſtood; and having thus reduced Phyſicks into a Narrow Compaſs, and a Syſtem, which the Corpuſcularians Modeſty made them backwards to do, by the Patronage of *Alexander* his Pupil, as well as the Credit of his Learning, as alſo by the eaſineſs of his Method; and his luck to have his Writings ſurvive thoſe of *Democritus*, when *Charles* the Great began to eſtabliſh Learning in Europe, theſe Advantages for Seven hundred Years kept the Corpuſcular Philoſophy out of Repute, & the Schools of the Peripateticks; which

is now again revived, the other being rejected, and derided as precarious, unintelligible and uſeleſs; and though the Greek Philoſophers Univerſally taught that the World was made, yet *Ariſt.* was able by his Subtlety to introduce into the Schools of the Philoſophers, an ill grounded Opinion of the Worlds Eternity, which firſt the Chriſtian Doctrin, and then both right Reaſon and that, perſwaded Men to reject.

And who knows that the Corpuſcular Philoſophy will always have the ſame advantages and eſteem they have now; ſince Opinions have their Viciſſitudes as well as other things. So the Opinion of the World's Motion was increaſed in it's Repute by the *Pythagoreans*, yet afterwards for 2000 Years it was laughed at, as falſe and ridiculous, yet it was again revived by *Copernicus* making a conſiderable progreſs amongſt Aſtronomers and Philoſophers. And even Obſolete Errors are ſometimes revived, as well as Truths. So that that which in one Age is in diſrepute, the next may be revived & reign.

Methods of Reaſoning in Philoſophy ſubject to Viciſſitudes.

But it is not only in the Credit of Men's Opinions, but their Method of Reaſoning, that theſe Viciſſitudes happen; *Democritus* exerciſing himſelf in the Diſſection of Animals, or applyed Mathematicks to explain the particular *Phænomena* of Nature, accounting for the Effects of Fire, by the Figure and Motion of it's particular Corpuſcles; and though this way of Philoſophizing was in requeſt before *Ariſtotle*, and ſome foot-ſteps met with of it in his writings, yet his followers introduced a quite contrary way of writing; for laying aſide the Uſe of Mathematicks, they entertain us with Diſputes

Diſputes of Objects of Phyſicks, of the *Materia Prima*, Subſtantial Forms, Privation, Place, Generation and Corruption; remaining after tedious Diſcourſes, as much ſtrangers to the Nature of what they diſputed; giving not as ſatisfactory accounts of particular Bodies as the meaneſt Mechanicks. The uſefulneſs of this Philoſophy made my Lord *Verulam* induſtrious to reſtore the Uſeful Method of the Antients, which thoſe induſtrious Phyſitians *Gilbert* and *Harvey* have been aſſiſting in; ſince whom *Carteſius* and *Goſſendus* have applyed Geometrical Problems to explain Phyſical Problems; and brought the Antient way of improving Natural Philoſophy by Mathematical and Experimental ways, into as much eſteem as ever.

The Nature of things ſubject to leſſen the Reputation of a Naturaliſt.

Another Reaſon why Phyſical Opinions may not be always in the ſame Requeſt, and preſerve the Reputation of the Author, is the Nature of things; for the moſt general Principles, Figure, Bigneſs, Motion, *&c.* of Matter being already laid; Reputation muſt be raiſed after, by ſubordinate Hypotheſes and Theories; and it is very difficult to lay an Hypotheſis down, ſo that it may not be made doubtful or diſapproved by any thing that may be diſcovered afterwards: It being the Conditions of a good Hypotheſis, that it agrees with other *Phænomena*, as well as thoſe it was made to explain; ſo that it muſt be agreeable as well with future *Phænomena* as preſent. And if we conſider how incompleat the Hiſtory of Nature is yet, and how difficult it is to build upon ſuch incompleat an Hiſtory of Nature, and how by Induſtry and Chance, may be made new Diſcoveries which

are not yet thought of, which may confute the Doctrins grounded upon what hath hitherto been obſerved. Thoſe who thought the Torrid Zone inhabitable, did not eſtabliſh their Notions upon wild Reaſonings, and what they ſaid might yet be believed, had they not been diſproved by Navigation. The ſolidity of the Celeſtial Orbs was the Opinion of Aſtronomers and Philoſophers for 1000 Years; and yet a free Trajection hath been obſerved, of the Motion of ſome Comets from one Orb to the other; and ſtrange Motions have been obſerved in the Planet *Mars*, being ſometimes obſerved nearer and ſometimes more diſtant from the Sun: ſuch undiſcovered *Phænomena* by the Antients, have made the Moderns believe thoſe Orbs a fluid *Æther*. And though Parts ſo remote are the moſt unlikely to ground Hypotheſes on, or to diſapprove them, yet after the *Ptolemaick* Syſtem had been approved ſeveral Ages, and the *Copernicans* and *Tychonians* agreed to it, as to Number of Planets, though they differed as to Order, yet by *Galilæus*'s diſcoveries of the *Satellites* of *Jupiter*, and *Hugenius*'s of a new Planet about *Saturn*, all the Aſtronomers have received the old ſeptenary Number of Planets, and taken in five, their Predeceſſors never dreamed of. So the paſſage of the Chyle was a long time miſtaken, till by new diſcoveries, new paſſages were aſſigned it.

The Cauſes of things often the Occaſion of new Opinions.

And not only the Qualities and Attributes, but the Cauſes of things may alſo, by new and accidental Diſcoveries, diſprove the Reputation of long approved Opinions. Quicklime growing hot upon the affuſion of Water, hath a long

long time been the grand Argument to prove *Antiperiſtaſis*, yet that hath been ſhewn erroneous by finding the ſame Effect upon pouring Hot Water on it inſtead of Cold. So Water Congealed hath been ſuppoſed to be Condenſed upon Congelation, yet we have elſewhere ſhewn, that Ice is Water expanded, and takes up more room than whilſt it was unfroze. And though Nature's abhorrency of a Vacuum hath been believed ever ſince *Ariſtotles* time, yet the *Torricellian* Experiments ſhewing the Weight and Spring of the Air, it appears, that thoſe *Phænomena* in the aſcent of Water in Pumps and others may be explained without it, by the Weight and Elaſtick Power of the Air. And in Practical Inventions, where the Fact ſeems evident, may by new diſcoveries ſhew leſs compleat than they were thought to be. It hath been believed, that by ſucking Pumps and Syphons, Water might be raiſed to any height, but by the diſappointment of Pumpmakers and Experiments made after, it appears, that Water will not riſe above 35 Foot, nor Quickſilver ſo many Inches. And as in the Invention of Weather-Glaſſes, ſo much applauded and uſed, as it hath been the trueſt ſtandard of the Heat and Cold of Weather, ſo it ſeems liable to no fear of deceiving us. For it is evident, when the weather is cold, the Water riſes higher than in Summer and other Seaſons; but upon the application of your warm hand to the top of the bubble, the Water will be depreſſed, by the Air being rarifyed; but upon the removal of your hand, when it grows cold again, the Water will evidently aſcend again. And yet finding the Air hath an evident weight,

weight, and that it varies uncertainly, I have made it appear, that theſe open Thermometers are not to be relyed on, ſince the Liquor is made to riſe & fall, not as commonly ſuppoſed; by the heat and cold of the ambient Air but by the weight of Atmoſphere according to it's different Gravity, which variation conſiderably affects the Weather-Glaſs. To this we ſhall add, that if a Man ſhould contrive a new Inſtrument, notwithſtanding he may uſe it many Years with good ſucceſs, yet in many more, the Inſtrument may be found fallacious; as he who firſt uſed the Magnetick Needle to find the Meridian Line, might well ſuppoſe it to point directly North and South, or declining two or three degrees; & that he had found out, a way to diſcover a Meridian Line, which we now find it may deceive us in, the Needle declining in many places, and in Tract of Time declining in the very ſame place. From whence it appears, that it is far leſs eaſie than ſome think to be ſure that they ſhall have the praiſes of future Ages, than that though they have them they ſhall be ſure to continue them. Nothing ſeeming to contribute more to the undervaluing the Study of Divinity, than the Expectation of a preſent as well as a future Fame from the Study of Phiſiology.

The purſuit of the Study of Divinity hinders not the Attainment of Philoſophy.

But though we ſhould be ſure that the purſuit of that ſtudy would ſecure us both Reputation now and for the Future, yet that ought not to encourage us to ſlight the Study of Divinity. For the Study of Divinity hinders us not from attaining the Knowledg of Nature; for Men of Parts may with ſucceſs apply themſelves to the Study

Study of ſome thing elſe; and but few have their Thoughts ſo employed with one Study, but if they have inclinations to purſue it they will find time to excel in it. *Copernicus* was a Church-Man, and *Gaſſendus* was a Doctor of Divinity, and *Clavius* and ſeveral others of the Jeſuits have ſtudyed Mathematicks ſucceſsfully as well as Divinity. And *Scheiner*, *Aquilonius*, *Kirher*, *Shottus*, and others, have Study'd Opticks as well as other Parts of Philoſophy. And *Ricciolus*, who wrote that large Volum of the *Alma Geſtum Novum*, was both a Divine and a Profeſſor of Divinity; and ſeveral of our Engliſh Eccleſiaſticks, both ſolid Divines and Excellent Preachers would have been equal with, if they had not exceeded *Pythagoras* and *Euclid*, or *Anaxagoras* & *Epicurus*, and ſome even *Archimedes* and *Democritus*. And though Induſtry and Curioſity may be employed in Phyſicks, that ſhould not be the Ultimate End of our ſtudies. *David* was as skillful in Muſick, as thoſe that only endeavoured to pleaſe themſelves in it. *Amos* 6. 5. though we may preſume, that he endeavoured to apply it to the Service of the Temple, and to celebrate the Praiſes of God with it. And ſince the Heathen Philoſophers courted Moral Vertue for her own ſake, yet they advanced it not ſo high, as the Heroick Practices of the true Chriſtians, who in the higheſt Practices of Vertue aim'd to pleaſe & enjoy God. Why ſhould Natural Knowledg be ſo eagerly purſued, and ſo proſperouſly by thoſe who only to pleaſe themſelves with it, rather than thoſe who are inclined to purſue it, that by their Diſcoveries in the Works of God, themſelves

ſelves and others may be invited, not only by the pleaſantneſs of the Knowledg, but by a diſpoſition to admire and praiſe God, whoſe Goodneſs is equal to his Wiſdom, and declares that *thoſe that Honour him, he will Honour*, 1 Sam. 2. 30.

And as a Man that hath only a reſpect, without being in Love with a fair Lady, may have a true and perfect, though indiſcompoſed with the *Idea* of her Face, ſo an inquiſite Contemplator of Nature, may be able to underſtand her, without making her his Miſtreſs or Idol.

But to proceed, the Study of Divinity may give a Man a Reputation as well as that of Philoſophy. For though the Fundamental Articles of Religion are evident as well as important, yet ſeveral Points in Divinity and Paſſages in Scripture, are hard to be explained, and will exerciſe the Abilities of the greateſt Wits, and give them opportunities to ſhew that they are ſo; Several of them being very Sublime in Nature; as the Nature, Attributes and Decrees of God; which are difficult to the ſhallow Underſtandings of Men; and ſeveral things which are not obſcure in their Nature are made ſo by our Ignorance, of the Languages they were wrote in, as well as the diſtance of Ages and Countries, where things were recorded to have been done. So that it requires as much Learning and Judgment to make it evident, what time things were done in, as to demonſtrate other things in Nature. And we ſee St. *Auſtin*, St. *Hierom*, and *Origen* have acquired as much Reputation as *Empedocles*, *Anaxagoras* or *Zeno*; and *Grotius*, *Salmaſius* and Dr.

Dr. *Mede* have advanced their Credit as much by expounding Texts of Scripture, as *Fracaſtorius* by his Book *de Simpathia* and *Antipathia*, *Levinus Lemnius de occultis rerum Miraculis*, *Cardanus de Subtilitate*, or *Fernelius de abditis rerum Cauſis*. And it will add to the Reputation, which Theological Diſcoveries and Illuſtrations may contribute to a Man, that the Importance of the Subjects, and the eagerneſs with which ſome Men purſue them, either for the ſake of Piety, Intereſt, Learned Truths, or to defend what they have taught for Truth, makes more Men zealous in the purſuit of ſuch Studies, than thoſe of Philoſophy; which few in their own Opinions are fit to Judge of, or much concern themſelves for. The writings of *Calvin*, *Socinus*, *Bellarmin*, &c. being more Famous and more Studied than *Teleſius*, *Severinus*, *Danus*, and other Innovators in Natural Philoſophy. And *Eraſtus* was far more Famous for a ſmall Tract againſt Particular Forms of Government than his elaborate Phyſical Diſputations; and there are ſcarce five Controverſies in Phyſicks ſo much diſputed for, as the five Articles of the *Remonſtrants*.

The Study of Divinity to be preferred before the conſideration of Reputation.

But ſuppoſing, that to purſue the Study of Divinity, the Acquiſt of Reputation was to be neglected, yet this ought not to deter us from it; for where the Caſe debated is, whether we are to obey or pleaſe God, rather than follow other things, we may apply that of the Prophet to the Jewiſh King, who being perſwaded from aſſiſting an Idolatrous Army of *Iſraelites*, and anſwering he ſhould looſe more by ſo doing, than the hire of a whole Army, had this anſwer from the

the Prophet. *The Lord is able to give thee far more than this*, 2 *Chron.* 25. 9. St. *Paul* who had endured ſo much for the Truths ſake, when he had a Glimpſe of the *recompence of reward*, ſays, that he *finds upon caſting up of the Account* (λογιζομαι being an Arithmetical Word made uſe of) *that the ſufferings of this preſent time are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that is to be revealed in us*, *Rom.* 8. 18. And if all the Perſecutions the Chriſtians ſuffered were not *ſuitable*, *Luke* 21.15. to that Glory, it would out ballance what we can undergo at the preſent; to loſe an advantage being only a Negative Affliction, and not an actual Suffering. Chriſt declared that whoever gave his followers a Cup of Cold Water upon his Account ſhould not be unrewarded; and when they asked what ſhould be done to them that left all to follow him, he told them of *Thrones*, as an exceeding recompence. And God's Goodneſs is indeed ſo extraordinary, as well as his Treaſure, that he is not only forwards to reward the ſmalleſt, but able to recompence the greateſt Services. *Solomon* had the greateſt Opportunities in ſatiſfying his deſires either to obtain Fame or any thing elſe, yet when God bid him, *Ask what I ſhall give thee*, 1 *Kings* 3. 5. he declined the Ambitious deſires of the things of this Life, for thoſe which might qualify him to ſerve and praiſe God. And even *He who being in the form of God, thought it not Robbery to be equal with God*, *Phil.* 2. 6, and forſook Heaven to be tempted on Earth, and more than *all the Kingdoms of the World and the Glory of them*; *for the Joy that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs, and deſpiſed the*

the Shame, as if Heaven was a reward, far above Honours, and a recompence enough to encourage us to embrace Torments. He that declines the applauſe of Men, for the Truth of God, will not forbear to gather what is immature, though by waiting Gods time, they would be full ripe and wholeſom. That *immarceſcible Crown* promiſed to them *who by Patient Continuance in well doing ſeek for Glory and Honour.* Rom. 2. 7. will highly recompence a fading Wreath upon Earth, where Reputation is as undeſervedly got as loſt, whereas in Heaven Celeſtial Honours ſecure their Title to them. And as our Saviour bid his Diſciples rejoyce, when they were treated with Calumny and Perſecution, *becauſe their reward is great in Heaven.* Mat. 5. 11, 12. we may conclude, that the hopes of a happy State hereafter, without applauſe here, may afford more ſatisfaction, than applauſe without that hope; ſo that we have no Reaſon to complain of the Study of Divinity, which perſwades us to quit a Tranſitory Fame for Solid and Eternal Glory.

CHAP. III.

Of the Excellency and Grounds of the Corpuſcular or Mechanical Philoſophy.

What Corpuſcular Philoſophy is recommended.

BEfore we proceed to ſhew the Excellences of the Corpuſcular Philoſophy above the Ariſtotelian, or Principles of the Chymiſts, it may be requiſite to obſerve, that when we ſpeak of

of the Corpuſcular Philoſophy, we are far from ſuppoſing with the *Epicureans*, that *Atoms* meeting in an Infinite *Vacuum* are capable of producing the World, and all the *Phænomena* in it. Nor do we with the Moderns, that God having put the whole Maſs of Matter into a continued Motion, they were able by their unguided Motions, to form ſuch a Syſtem. But we are urging ſuch Philoſophy as extends only to things Corporeal, diſtinguiſhing betwixt the *Original of things*, and the ſucceeding Courſe of Nature, which informs us in reſpect of the former, that God gave Motion to Matter, and ſo guided their Parts, as they might convene into a World, according to his deſign; and eſtabliſhed ſuch Laws of Motion, as are commonly called the Laws of Nature. And this being ſaid as to the former, in reſpect of the later we teach, that the Univerſe being once formed by God, and the Laws of Motion being ſetled and continued by the Concourſe of Divine Providence, all *Phænomena* are Phyſically produced, by the Mechanical Affections of Matter, according to Mechanical Laws. But to proceed, to the particulars that may recommend the Corpuſcular Philoſophy.

The Clearneſs of it's Principles and Explications.

The firſt thing that may recommend the Corpuſcular Philoſophy, is the Clearneſs of it's Principles and Explications. The Peripateticks are perplexed with Intricate Diſputes about *Matter*, *Privation*, *Subſtantial Forms*, and their Eductions. And the Chymiſts are at a loſs to give Definitions of their Principles conſiſtent with one another; not to mention the Intricacy of their Doctrin about the *Archæas*, *Gas*, *Baſs*, *&c.*

&c. which may well make their Expreſſions obſcure, when their Conceptions are ſo. Therefore it cannot be expected, that their Explications ſhould be intelligible, which are made by ſuch Principles; and indeed many of them are ſo general and ſlight and ſo hard to be Underſtood, that they cannot eaſily be applyed, to particular *Phænomena*; and in ſome of the more ſubtle Diſcourſes of the Peripateticks, they are ſo ſuperficial that they ſeem more like Painters than Philoſophers, and make Men rather think they ſee Caſtles and Towns, than preſent any ſolid Buildings, the whole being compoſed of Superficial Colours and Art. But in the Corpuſcular Philoſophy, our meaning is eaſily Underſtood, when we talk of *Local Motion*, *Reſt*, *Bigneſs*, *Shape*, *Order*, *Situation* and *Contexture* of the Parts of Matter; and the Accounts deduced from them are ſo clear, that the *Peripateticks* and *Chymiſts* acquieſce in the Explications, and ſeek no further; when the Effect ſeems to be produced by ſome hidden Form, or an Occult Quality. And the *Ariſtotelians*, who aſcribe the Motions of the Celeſtial Orbs to Intelligences, do not account for Eclipſes by any Agency of theirs. And we make a Jeſt of thoſe *Indians*, who endeavour to relieve the diſtreſſed Luminaries, whom they ſuppoſe to be in ſome fainting Fit, by the ratling of Inſtruments: for when we know that an Eclipſe depends on an Interpoſition of the Moon, betwixt the Light and the Earth, we need no other Principles to explain it. And when the Image of a Man is caſt into the Air by a Spherical Concave Looking-Glaſs, ſome take it for Witchcraft, yet

Catoptricus without *Ariſtotle* or *Paracelſus*, tells us, it is done by a reflection of the Beams of Light, made convergent according to Optical Laws. But theſe Corpuſcular Principles are rather denyed, not becauſe the Explications are not clear, but becauſe they think they are applicable but to a few things.

The fewneſs of Principles another recommendation, &c.

The next thing that may recommend Mechanical Principles is, that the Number of Principles cannot be fewer than Matter and Motion; for Matter without Motion is unactive, a Body being incapable without Motion to exerciſe any Action, or to undergo any Alteration, though it may modify the Action of the Body that moves againſt it. Nor can any Principles be more primary, than Matter and Motion, for either both were at once created; or if Matter were eternal, Motion muſt be occaſioned by ſome Supernatural Immaterial Agent, or it muſt flow from the Nature of Matter it belonged to. Further, there can be no Principles more Simple, than Matter and Motion, neither being to be divided into any thing, which may argue a Compoſition.

The next thing that recommends theſe principles is, their Comprehenſiveneſs. The reſult then of one part of Matter in Motion againſt another, is, either to force it into it's Bulk, or to divide it into parts of a determinate *Motion*, *Figure*, *Size*, *Poſture*, *Reſt*, *Order* or *Texture*, the two firſt of which are capable of a vaſt variety. For the figure muſt either be one of the five regular Geometrical ones, or a Species of Solid ones. *viz.* a *Cone*, *Cylinder*, *&c.* or irregular as Hoops, Feathers, *&c.* And as the Figure

gure may be various, ſo the Motion of ſuch parts may be ſo too, by different Tendences or degrees of Celerity, as alſo being with or without Rotation, and other Circumſtances, which may vary Modifications; as the different lines it moves in, being Circular, Illiptical, Parabolical, Hyperbolical, Spiral, *&c.* A crooked Line may be compounded of two or three other Motions; ſo that a great many ſort of Curves may be made of Compoſitions and Decompoſitions.

And if a ſingle particle of Matter, by only two Mechanical Affections, may be diverſifyed ſo many ways, what a vaſt Number of Varieties muſt reſult from the Compoſitions and Decompoſitions of a thouſand inviſible Corpuſcles, that may be compounded in one ſingle Body, and each of them endowed with two or three of the firtle principles above mentioned; ſince the Compoſition may be yet further diverſifyed, by the Texture of them convening into a Body, endowed with it's own Bigneſs, Shape and Pores; and not only acts, but is acted upon ſeveral ways, by virtue of it's place amongſt other Bodies. So that if we do but conſider, an innumerable Diverſities may ariſe from a ſmall Number of Compoſitions. And thoſe who think that the Mechanical Principles, can only account for the *Phænomena* of a Part of Natural Phyloſophy, as Staticks, Hydroſtaticks, *&c.* but cannot be applyed to all the *Phænomena* of Material things, may as well ſay, that the Four and Twenty Letters may make up the Words in one Book, or one Language, but cannot compound all the Words in a

Library; or in all the Languages in the World.

An Objection considered.

And as there are ſome, who, obſerving the force of ſize, ſhape and ſcituation, *&c.* in Engins, allow the Power of Mechanical Principles in Bodies of a conſiderable Bulk, and evident Mechaniſm, and may therefore ſucceſsfully account for ſuch *Phænomena*, yet they think they cannot be applyed to the Minute Tranſactions of inviſible Parts of Matter, and therefore refer ſuch *Phænomena* to Subſtantial Forms, and real Qualities. But the Laws of Matter and Motion take place both in ſmall as well as great Portions of Matter; each having their determinate Bulk and Figure; and if you view a grain of Sand with a Microſcope, it will appear that each hath it's own ſize and ſhape, as well as groſſer Bodies. And if you let fall a Stone and a Pebble from the Top of a high place, the ſmall one accelerates it's Motion in Deſcent as well as the great one, and the ſame Rules of Motion are obſervable in Cannon, as in ſmaller Shot. And though Nature uſes more curious Rules than Art; and an Artiſt according to the Quantity of Matter, and the things he deſigns may make uſe of different Inſtruments, yet makes Work of the ſame Nature, though of different Bulk, where there is the like, though not equal Art and Motion. As a Smith forges great Barrs or Wedges, and makes ſtrong Chains, but with leſs Inſtruments, makes ſmall nails and filings, and with ſmaller Inſtruments, can make Links ſo fine, that they might be faſtened to a Flea, which may be moved by it. So that to deny the Principles of Mechaniſm, to take

take place in ſmall Bodies as well as great ones; would be the ſame as to allow them in a Town Clock, but not in a Watch; or becauſe the Globe of the Earth is ſeven or eight Thouſand Miles in Diameter, that Magnetical Laws are not to be allowed in a ſmall Loadſtone; yet we find this ſmall Globe hath it's Pores, Equators, Meridians and other Magnetical Properties as well as the Globe of the Earth.

The Doctrin of the Peripateticks further conſidered.

They that make uſe of ſuch Principles to reſolve *Phænomena*, as Subſtantial Forms and real Qualities, that are Agents, which act we know not how; when they tell us of indeterminate Agents as the *Soul of the World*, *the Univerſal Spirit*; *the Plaſtick Power*, in ſome Caſes they may tell us ſome thing, but not ſatisfactory to thoſe that want to know, not only the General Agent, but by what means and after what manner the *Phænomenon* is produced, *Sennertus* tells us of Diſeaſes by Incantations, but that would be but an inſatisfactory Account to one that was ill, to be told he was bewitched; nor will he reſt ſatisfyed, if the Symptoms can be aſcribed to another Cauſe, as Hyſterick Fits, Epilepſies, Convulſions, *&c.* And if it cannot be referred to thoſe, he will endeavour to account for them, by conſidering the Nature of the Morbifick Matter; and the Structure of Human Bodies with other concurring Cauſes; and it would be but little Satisfaction in knowing the Nature of a Watch, and Reaſon of it's Motions to be told, that ſuch a Man made it; or to know the Nature of an Eccho to be informed that it was a Man and a Wood or a Vault that occaſioned it.

Why the Mechanical Principles are ſo much denyed and ſlighted.

But to conſider the chief Reaſon, why ſome agree not to the Corpuſcular Philoſophy it is that it pretends to ſuch Univerſal Principles, and ſo Mathematical, that no Phyſical *Hypotheſis* can compare with it. But if theſe Principles are ſo univerſal, they rather include than exclude any other *Hypotheſis* founded in Nature; and thoſe that are rather diſpoſed to unite than multiply Sects, will find them deducible from, and reconcileable to them; for ſuch *Hypotheſes* will account for *Phænomena*, either by a determinate Number of Ingredients, as the *Tria Prima* of the Chymiſts, or by ſome general Agent, as *the Platonick Soul of the World*, or an *Univerſal Spirit*, or both together.

The Platonick Hypotheſis explained.

As to thoſe that pretend to ſome general Agent, in explaining difficult *Phænomena*, we are not to conſider ſo much what the Agent is, or does, as what Alterations the Patient undergoes, to produce the propoſed *Phænomena*, and after what manner thoſe Effects are brought about; ſo that a Mechanical Philoſopher conſidering that one Part of matter can but act upon another, by Local Motion, or it's Effects, we muſt conclude, that if the Agent be not Phyſical, it cannot explain *Phænomena* Phyſically; and if it be Intelligible and Phyſical, it is reducible to matter, and ſome of it's Catholick Affections. And then the indefinite Indiviſibility of the matter, the great Efficacy of Motion, and great Variety of Coalitions, and Structures of minute inſenſible Corpuſcles, being conſidered, it cannot be impoſſible to make it out by Mechanical Corporeal Agents; however ſubtle, diffuſed or active, if really exiſtent in Nature,

Nature, by what Name ſoever it is called or diſguiſed. The *Carteſian Materia Subtilis* is evidently a Subſtance and as univerſally diffuſed, as the Univerſal Spirit of the Spagyriſts or the *Anima Mundi* of the Platoniſts. But further, whether the phyſical Agent be inanimate or not, altogether Corporeal, or united with an Intelligent Subſtance, the phyſical Changes will be affected much after the ſame manner. As if Corn be ground to Meal, the Mill-ſtones, their Motion and Structure muſt be much the ſame; and the Corn will undergo a various Contrition, let the Mill that ground it be what it will, that is, turned by Water, Wind or a Brute, or Rational Agent. And if an Angel ſhould Work a Change in a Human Body, we cannot conceive how he ſhould do it without Local Motion, ſince if nothing was miſplaced it muſt be juſt as it was before.

The Chymical Principles conſidered.

As for the Chymiſts, that would deduce Compleat Natural Philoſophy, from *Salt*, *Sulphur* and *Mercury*, or any Number of Ingredients, they may conſider, that the Material Parts of Bodies conſidered as quieſcent things, can account for but a ſmall Part of the *Phænomena* of Nature, and therefore they muſt be obliged to ſuppoſe them to be active, which they cannot be without Local Motion, and the reſults of that, attended with Parts of various ſizes and ſhapes; ſo that the greateſt part of the *Phænomena*, cannot be explained, without the Aſſiſtance of the Mechanical and more comprehenſive Affections of Matter, eſpecially Local Motion. Indeed *Salt*, *Sulphur* and *Mercury* are to be obtained by Fire from a great many Bodies,

and it may be of uſe to a Naturaliſt to know, that a Body abounds with much *Sulphur*, whence it will be probable that the Body in which ſuch Qualities are predominant, may be ſaid, to have the Effects reſulting from the predominancy of ſuch a Principle. But though Chymical Explications are ſometimes moſt obvious and ready, yet they help to explain but a very few *Phænomena*; and leſs Fundamentally and ſatisfactorily than the Mechanical Principles; for the Principle of *Sulphur* muſt owe it's Qualities to Particles of a convenient Size, Shape, Motion or Reſt, and a peculiar Contexture, which are Mechanical Affections of Matter in a due Coalition. This may be further illuſtrated by what happens in Artificial Fire Works; for though Gunpowder is the main Ingredient, and ſeveral of the *Phænomena* depend on a different Quantity of it in the Compoſition; yet it's diſpoſition to take fire, and to explode, depend on a Mechanical Contexture of more Simple Parts of Matter, as *Nitre*, *Charcoal*, and *Sulphur*. And though the Chymiſts take *Sulphur* for a Hypoſtatical Principle, it's Inflammability is owing to more Simple and Primary Particles. Chymiſts allowing it to abound with an Inflammable Salt, and contains ſome Terreſtrial Parts.

Hypoſtatical Principles compounded Bodies.

If it be alledged, that the Reſults of Chymical *Analyſes* are ſimple Bodies and irreſoluble; this appears erroneous from what we have ſhewn elſewhere of *Salts*, *Sulphurs*, or *Mercury*, which are compoſed of more primitive Portions of Matter; and compounded Bodies are as difficultly reſoluble, as thoſe they call ſimple Bodies,

Bodies, as for inſtance, Green Glaſs which is much more durable; and ſome Amets will be eaſily vitrifyed in the Fire, retaining ſtill their Nature, and often times their Colour; which is a compounded Body, made of Salt, Powder of Pebble or Sand and calcined Tin, and if it is not white, is tinged with ſome Mineral. But ſuppoſing the Hypoſtatical Principles irreſoluble, the Effects aſcribed to them cannot be produced out, without Local Motion. Nor would it be an Argument againſt the Corpuſcularian Philoſophy, ſhould Bodies be reſolved, by ſome finer and purer Analyſis, into more or leſs Principles, as ſome aſſert, that all Bodies may be reſolved into Fire. Nor would *Helmont*'s *Alkaheſt* have any better Effect, though he pretended to reduce Stones into Salt equiponderant with the Mineral, and reduce that as well as other Bodies into inſipid Water: For whatever the Number of Principles are, they muſt conſiſt of inſenſible Corpuſcles of particular bulks and figures, from the contexture of which thoſe Principles reſult. And even the *Alkaheſtical* reſults as Salts, depend upon Mechanical Principles, the Solidity and Taſtes of Salts, reſulting from the ſtiffneſs, ſharpneſs and other Mechanical Affections of the minute Particles of Matter; and if this Salt is reduced into inſipid Water, this may be done by a further Comminution of the Parts, and by wearing of thoſe Edges, which before briskly affected the Organ of Taſte; Fluidity and Firmneſs depending on the two grand Principles of *Reſt* and *Motion*; the Agitation or Reſt, the looſer contact or ſtricter coheſion of Parts being ſufficient to make a Body

fluid

fluid at one time and ſolid at another; ſo that ſhould Chymiſtry diſcover other Homogenuous Subſtances, theſe new ones would be as reconcileable to the Corpuſcular Principles, and ſtand in need of the more Catholick Principles, eſpecially Local Motion. And without the help of Mechanical Principles, and their Affections of Matter, the beſt Hypotheſes that have been pitched upon have proved deficient, aſſigning ſuch common and indefinite Cauſes in their Explications, as are not ſatisfactory to an inquiſitive Perſon; and if they aſſign particular Cauſes, they are ſo precarious, and liable to be diſproved by Circumſtances or Inſtances, as diſagree with their Doctrin. Yet thoſe who eſpouſe ſuch Hypotheſes need not be afraid to allow the Mechanical Principles their Prerogative, ſince they are reconcileable to their own Principles, if theſe agree with the *Phænomena* they are applyed to; thoſe being ſubordinate to the Corpuſcular Philoſophy, by whoſe Mechanical Affections Univerſal Matter may be variouſly compounded and decompounded; for if ſuch a variety of Buildings may be contrived of the ſame Bricks, how much more may a great variety of Ingredients be formed, by the various Contextures and Coalitions of parts of Matter not of the ſame, but different ſizes and ſhapes. And without denying the Corpuſcular Philoſophy, the minute Ingredients of thoſe ſubordinate Principles, may be ſo firmly connected, as ſcarce ever to be ſeparated; as Mercury and Gold may be variouſly diſguiſed, yet reduced to their priſtine Forms. Thus Glaſs and Amet retain their Natures in the vitrifying force of Fire;

Fire; and common Glaſs will neither be worked upon by *Aq. Fortis* nor *Aq. Regis* though the former diſſolves *Mercury* and the later *Gold.*

Immaterial Subſtances do not help to explain Phyſical Cauſes.

From what hath been ſaid it may appear, that beſides Rational Souls, Immaterial Subſtances numbered amongſt Natural Agents, have unknown ways of working, & tho' they may help to conſtitute and effect things, they will but little contribute to ſhew how they are effected; ſo that however Natural things are conſtituted, they are only to be explained by Mechanical Principles; for though we ſhould allow with the *Ariſtotelians*, that the Planets were made of a Quinteſſential Matter, and moved by Angels or immaterial Intellegences, yet to explain their Progreſſions and Retrogradations as well as Stations, and other *Phænomena*, we are obliged to have recourſe to Eccentricks, Epicicles, *&c.* and Elliptical and other Lines of Motion; and in other Theories, where Motion, Figure, and other Mechanical Affections are employed. But of Material Principles there are none but what may be reduced to Mechanical Principles as ſubordinate to them. And when the Chymiſt ſhews, that Bodies are compounded of their Ingredients, the Corpuſcular Philoſophy will ſhew, that the Qualities of their Principles depend on their peculiar Textures, and the Mechanical Affections of their Particles. And becauſe Chymiſtry produces a great many Bodies uncommon, as well as their Operations, to affirm, that they cannot be accounted for by the Mechanical Principles of Philoſoyhy, is the ſame thing as to aſſert, that the vaſt Variety of Tunes in Muſick Books, or their Notes, have no dependance

pendance on the Scale of Muſick; or as if, becauſe beſides *Rhombuſſes*, *Rhomboids*, *Trapeziums*, *&c.* and a great many regular and irregular *Polygons*, one ſhould maintain, that there are amongſt them Rectilinear Figures, which cannot be reduced to Triangles, or have affections which might overthrow *Euclids* Doctrin of *Triangles* and *Polygons*.

Occult Qualities explained by the Mechanical Hypotheſis.

To what we have ſaid, we ſhall only add, that as Mechanical Principles are preferable to others for their clearneſs, ſo they have of late been ſucceſsfully applyed to explain ſeveral difficult *Phænomena*, before aſcribed to occult Qualities; and when it is further improved, no doubt but it will be applyed to explain more difficult *Phænomena*. And here we ſhall obſerve, that it is not always neceſſary, that he that propoſes an Hypotheſis, ſhould prove it *à priori*, or to demonſtrate that other Hypotheſes are falſe; for as *Plato* ſaid, the World was God's Epiſtle writ to Mankind, ſo Phyſical Explications of it's Parts ſeem to be like ſo many Keys to explain a Letter wrote in Cyphers; for though one Man may have found out a true Key, it will be hard to prove, except by tryal, that a particular Word is not right explained by another, or to prove *à priori* that this is to be prefered, and theirs rejected, yet when they are tryed, that which is the moſt coherent with the Senſe of them, is ſufficient to make it accepted as right; and ſo in Phyſical Hypotheſes, there are ſome which without falling upon others, obtain the approbation of diſcerning Men, who find their aptneſs to reſolve *Phænomena*, agreeable to known Obſervations and the Laws of Nature, which

which no doubt will recommend the Corpuſcular Philoſophy.

But to give a ſummary of what we thought requiſite to ſay upon the foregoing Subject, we ſhall conclude; that preſuppoſing the Creation and Providence of God, we treat only of Material things, abſtracting Immaterial Beings, and all Miraculous or Supernatural Agents and Operations. We ſhall therefore propoſe the Heads of what we have propoſed, to recommend the Corpuſcular Philoſophy. And *firſt*, Of Principles, none can be fewer, or more primary, than *Matter* and *Motion*. *Secondly*, The Effects of various determined *Motion* in *Matter* are, to divide it into Parts of different ſize and ſhape, and to give them different Motions, by which means reſult ſeparate fragments, poſture, order, and ſituation, and when they convene peculiar Compoſitions and Contextures. *Thirdly*, By various Catholick Affections, and Coalitions, Bodies of ſeveral kinds are produced, according to the Quantity of Matter, and the Compoſitions of the Principles. And theſe different Bodies, by vertue of Motion and Reſt, and other Mechanical Affections, which make them both Active and Paſſive, they acquire ſeveral Qualities, which acting upon the peculiar Organs of Senſe, thoſe Perceptions communicated to the Soul are ſenſations. *Fourthly*, The Principles *Matter*, *Motion*, *Reſt*, *Bigneſs*, *Shape*, *Poſture*, *Order*, *Texture*, are ſo comprehenſive, as to be applicable to all the *Phænomena* of Nature; no Immaterial Principle or Agent, though Intelligible, being able to explain a *Phænomenon*, it's Phyſical way of working not being to be underſtood; it not appearing

A Summary of the whole.

appearing how an Immaterial Agent ſhould produce a Change without Mechanical Principles, eſpecially Local Motion. Thus the Soul of Man can produce nothing without guiding the Motions of the Spirits, and thoſe Parts of the Body which ſerve to Voluntary Motion. *Fifthly*, If the Principles be of a Corporeal Nature, they muſt either be the ſame with the Corporeal Principles mentioned, or leſs general, and conſequently ſubordinate and reducible to ours, which by various Compoſitions, may lay the foundations of ſeveral Hypotheſes, and by minute Concretions, form Elementary Ingredients of compound Bodies, which are in moſt Tryals ſimilar Bodies, which may be ſeveral ways diverſifyed, as Themes in Latin are by Propoſitions, *&c.* ſo that there is as much danger of the Mechanical Hypotheſis being overthrown, as by ſo much of any new Hypotheſis as is true, as that a Language will be found out or propoſed diſagreeable to, & which cannot be reduced to the Letters of the Alphabet.

CHAP. IV.

Containing ſome Conſiderations touching the Style of the Scriptures.

THe Style of the Scriptures is a Subject, that will require both Time and a great deal of Attention, ſeveral Men of Wit, who acknowledg the Authority of the Scriptures, finding fault with the Style; and thus divert many

ny from the Study, nay even from reading thoſe Sacred Writings, at once both entertaining irreverent Thoughts of it, and denying themſelves the Opportunity of being convinced of their Miſtakes, which is a great diſadvantage to a Book, which only wants to be underſtood to recommend it, and gain the higheſt Veneration. Thoſe Writings, like the Honey, which *Sauls* adjuration prevented the *Iſraelites* from eating, 1 *Sam.* 14. *v.* 27, 29. which taſted, both gratifyed the Taſte, and enlightned the Eyes.

In what ſenſe the ſtyle of the Scriptures is conſidered.

In conſidering the Style of the Scriptures, we ſhall not reſpect the ſtricter Senſe of the Word, ſignifying the Choice and Diſpoſition of Words, but the larger Senſe comprehending not only the Phraſeology, Tropes and Figures; but the Method, and Lofty Character as well as Humble, as alſo, the Pathetical or Languid, or the Cloſe and Incoherent way of Writing; in brief all the Manners of an Authors expreſſing himſelf.

Imputations againſt the Scripture Enumerated.

It was ſaid of *Jupiter*, that he could not pleaſe all; and it ſeems, even the true God cannot keep himſelf free from the audacious Imputations of his Creatures, who impiouſly quarrel both with his Revelations and Providence, and have as little regard to his Words as his Actions. Some, in reſpect of the Style of the Scriptures, ſay it is too Obſcure; Others, Immethodical; Others, Contradictory to it ſelf; Others, that Parts which are near one another are Incoherent; Others, Inornamental; Others, Flat and moves not the Affections; Others, that it contains things Trivial and Impertinent, and hath uſeleſs Repetitions. But no wonder ſo many Objections

jections ſhould be made, it being the buſineſs of the Devil, who is an Enemy to Man as well as the Church, to excite Irreverence to thoſe things which would be deſtructive to him and his Kingdom. *Cicero* ſays, *Vitari non poſſe reprehenſionem niſi nihil Scribendo.* But as Aſtronomers have fancied Bulls, Bears, *&c.* amongſt the Stars, ſo the Adverſaries of the Scripture have imagined Enormities in a Book full of Celeſtial Lights fit to ſhew the World the way to Truth and Happineſs. But theſe Imputations ought as little to deter a Man from ſtudying the Scriptures, as the Name of the Bear ſhould frighten a Mariner from looking upon the North Star.

The Method in anſwering them.

Now as our deſign is to defend the Reputation of that Sacred Book, ſo it is alſo to engage you to ſtudy and value it, and therefore in anſwering the Objections againſt it, we ſhall uſe no other Method, but as they occur to our Thoughts, but before we proceed to anſwer Objections, we ſhall offer the following Conſiderations.

The firſt Conſideration.

And *firſt*, Thoſe who find fault with the Style of the Scripture, are apt to judge of it, by the Tranſlations they read it in; for want of Skill in the Original, eſpecially the Hebrew. And none but a Linguiſt can judge, how much a Book may loſe of it's Elegancy, by Tranſlations; eſpecially if the two Languages are ſo different as the Eaſtern and Ours. And the Style of the Scriptures ſuffers more by this means, than any other Book; for the Veneration Interpreters have had for that Book, have influenced the Interpreters to render it, both from the Hebrew and the Greek, Word for Word,

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for fear of loſing the Senſe, that the Eloquence it might appear in, in it's own Language, as loſt. And as in other Caſes, the Interpreters take the Liberty to uſe other Phraſes, that they may expreſs his meaning, without injuring his Reputation, in Tranſlating the old Teſtament, Hebrew are not put into Latin, or Engliſh Phraſes, but Latin or Engliſh Words; and often not underſtanding, or conſidering the different ſignifications of Words, Particles and Tenſes in the Hebrew Tongue, have repreſented it full of Imperfections, which would not have been found in the Original. And though this fault carries it's excuſe along with it, yet it is a great diſadvantage to appear with ſuch peculiar ones, beſides what are common to other Tranſlations. And as the figures in Rhetorick are reduced to two comprehenſive Sorts, the one depending on the ſound and the placing of Words, (which figure the Greek Rhetoricians call γήματα λέξεως) where, tho' the ſence be retained, if the Method of words be loſt, the figure is ſo too; which compriſes thoſe figures called *Epanadoſis* and *Antanaclaſis*, beſides a great many more which are loſt in literal Tranſlations. Beſides there are in *Hebrew* as in other Languages appropriated Graces, and Emphaſes peculiar to ſome Expreſſions, which muſt needs ſuffer by any Tranſlations, and are quite loſt, when Tranſlations are Verbatim. And as a Painter may draw the Noſe, Lips and Cheeks, yet the Vivacity of the Eyes is ſcarce to be equalled with a pencil, ſo a Tranſlator may render a great part of what he compoſes, yet ſome ſhining Expreſſions can-

not be repreſented to the Life; and this may be applyed to the Bible ſooner than any other Tranſlations, for two Reaſons; for *Furſt*, the *Hebrew* of the old Teſtament is more difficult to Tranſlate than *Syriack* or *Arabick*; becauſe in the later, there are ſeveral Books Extant, from which we may learn the ſignifications of the Words and Phraſes, whereas in the *Hebrew*, the old Teſtament is all that remains of the pure *Hebrew*, where there are many Words that occur but ſeldom, which we know but one Signification of, or it hath but a few Acceptations which we think we clearly underſtand in thoſe Texts, whereas the Original Language conſiſting of Words, not very Numerous, and which are equivocal enough, they abounding with meanings very different; and if we obſerve the Numerous Conqueſts of *David*, the Wiſdom of *Solomon*, his Proſperity, Fleets and Commerce, which might enrich and ſpread the *Hebrew* Language, it is not unlikely the ſame Word or Phraſe may have different Significations, from what have been taken Notice of, ſince it appears from the *Chaldee*, *Syriack* and *Arabick*, that the *Hebrew* Words and Phraſes have different Significations from thoſe the Interpreters of the Bible have given them, eſpecially the Moderns; which is evident from the *Septuagint*, which gives thoſe Words and Phraſes, a different Signification from what we do in our Texts. Whence it may be probably conjectured, that thoſe Expreſſions which in our Tranſlations may ſeem flat, improper or incoherent, might be more properly expreſſed, were we as well acquainted with the *Hebrew* Language as

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thoſe that wrote thoſe ſacred Books; for perhaps ſome of thoſe various Significations might ſeem more Eloquent and Emphatical. An Example of this, we may find in the Engliſh Tongue in Forms of ſpeech relating to the Birth of Infants, to which peculiar Notions belong; as a Woman hath looked every hour theſe 10 days; yeſterday ſhe cryed out; that ſhe hada quick & eaſy Labour; that laſt night ſhe was brought to bed; that She lyes in; that it is fit we ſhould remember the Lady in the Straw; any of which Expreſſions are underſtood by an Engliſhman; but if they were literally tranſlated into *Hebrew*, *Greek*, or *French*, or *Italian*, thoſe People being unacquainted with our Phraſes, would not underſtand them; and if they were tranſlated by an Interpreter, in the moſt obvious Signification of the Words, thoſe Expreſſions would appear with a great Diſadvantage, and to a French-Man or an Italian would appear very impertinent and Nonſenſical.

But further, we have not only loſt ſeveral Significations of the *Hebrew* Words and Phraſes, but the means of our informing our ſelves with ſeveral Particulars relating to the Typography, Hiſtory, Rites, Opinions of the Antient *Jews*, and other Nations, without the Knowledg of which, a Book of ſuch Antiquity as the old Teſtament and wrote by *Jews*, muſt needs loſe a great deal of the Eſteem and Reliſh, we ſhould have of it, could we diſcern the references and alluſions, to Proverbs, Opinions, and Stories; ſuch paſſages may belong to. And this will appear the leſs Improbable, if we take Notice, that the handſomeſt Paſſages in *Juvenal*,

Perſius, *Martial*, &c. are quite loſt to thoſe unacquainted with Roman Stories, Cuſtoms and Government, and a great many Circumſtances relating to the Condition of ſuch times; for which Reaſon, thoſe Books have been obliged to Learned Comments upon almoſt every Line, to ſhew the Eloquence and Wit of the Authors; and if ſuch Explications are requiſite for Books wrote in European Languages about Secular Affairs, where the Times and Countries are much better known, we muſt loſe much of the Eloquence of the Book of *Job*, *David* and *Solomon*, which treat of Sublime and Supernatural Myſteries, wrote in Regions remote, and Ages ſo long paſt, to the Circumſtances of which we muſt be ſtrangers.

The Second Conſideration.

But to proceed to the Second Conſideration, we ought to diſtinguiſh betwixt what the Scripture ſays, and what is ſaid in Scripture; for the Bible is not to be eſteemed as an Oration, but a Body of Laws, like an Engliſh Statute Book, where the Law-giver ſpeaks to the People. And as it conſiſts of Compoſures of Different kinds, and wrote at different times, though the holy Men of God were aſſiſted by the Holy Spirit, yet ſeveral are introduced ſpeaking beſides the Author, and the Pen-Men. For not only the Books of *Joſhuah*, *Judges*, *Samuel*, *Kings*, *Chronicles*, the Evangeliſts, *Acts* of the Apoſtles, and other Parts of Scripture, are Hiſtorical; and many others, though they are not meer Narratives, ſeveral Sayings and Expreſſions are recorded, belonging not to the Author of the Scriptures, his Secretaries perſonating other Perſons; ſo that the Scriptures contain

contain not only the Sayings of Prophets, Kings and Prieſts, but Souldiers, Shepherds, and Women, and others who might ſpeak without Wit or Eloquence; & it would be injurious to impute want of Eloquence to the Author, for the Expreſſions of other People. For though in Romances the Speakers are made to expreſs themſelves as well as the Hiſtorians, yet ſuch were Embaſſadors, Orators, Generals, or eminent Men, whoſe Parts were extraordinary, as well as their Employments; or the Hiſtorian takes the Liberty to make Speeches for them; and relates not what ſuch Perſon ſaid, but what they ought to ſay upon ſuch occaſions. Whereas one of the ſacred Writers confeſſes, that he followed not cunningly deviſed Fables, but faithfully recorded both their ſayings and actions, obſerving the Laws of Truth more than the conditions of the Speaker.

A Malicious Cavil Anſwered by this Conſideration.

But the Style of the Scriptures is not only to be juſtifyed by this Conſideration; but the malicious Cavils of thoſe who charge the Scripture with teaching Vice, by ungodly ſayings and examples often mentioned, may be alſo put to ſilence; for *they are not all Iſrael that are of Iſrael, Rom.* 9.6. and it is not all Scripture that is in Scripture; for both wicked Perſons as well as the Tempter are repreſented; the Holy Ghoſt by the Scripture not confirming what they ſaid as true, but recording it as true that they ſaid it. But often thoſe who cavil never read thoſe Paſſages, where they might find, that the Blaſphemies and Crimes regiſtred there, hinder not that Hiſtory from being Divine. And though Evil things are recorded, ſuch things are neceſſary to exerciſe the Children of God, and

ſhew his Providence. And ſince ſeveral things are to be avoided as well as practiſed, we ought to have Examples of what we are to avoid, as well as imitate. And Rocks and Shelves may give Directions as well as the Pole Star. And as we ought to know the Tempters Methods, before we can be able to avoid them, ſo we cannot learn them better than from one who can diſcover *the Depths of Satan*, *Rev.* 2. 24. the Antidote being there laid down, as well as the Poyſon; and where by other Men's miſcarriages or victory we may learn the State of our Warfare. And as Chymiſts obſerve, that thoſe ſimples that bear the ſignature of a Part, are Medicinal in the Diſtempers of thoſe Parts. So vitious Perſons mentioned in ſacred Writings, are Antidotes againſt thoſe Vices, like the Brazen Serpent in the Wilderneſs, ſet up to cure the Poyſon of thoſe they reſemble. *Whatever things were written aforetimes, were written for our Inſtruction*, *Rom.* 15. 4. And whom the Scripture ſtyles Lyons, Wolves and Foxes, are by God's aſſiſtance to his Saints, as the North Star to Pilots. And as *Elias* was fed ſometimes by Angels, by a Woman, or by Ravens, ſo both good and bad Examples in Scripture, are the Aliment of Vertue and of the Souls of God's Servants, they and their Examples verifying what St. *Paul* ſays, that all things co-operate for Good to them that Love God.

The Third Conſideration.

But *Thirdly*, The Books contained in the Bible, were primarily addreſſed to their Cotemporaries, yet not for one Age only, but the whole People of God, of ſeveral Nations and Sexes, ſo that it was fit it ſhould be written in

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a way which might not exclude deſigned advantages; and therefore they were wiſely contrived, that they might comprehend the ſeveral Abilities and Diſpoſitions of Men; ſome part of Scripture or other being aptly ſuited to all Diſpoſitions of Mind, as *Nathan* once ſaid to *Daniel*, *Thou art the Man*, 2 *Sam.* 12. *v.* 7. and this Deſign of the Scripture, will aſſiſt us to defend the Style of a great many Texts, eſpecially ſuch as may be reduced to the five following kinds. And *firſt*, Thoſe Books which contained the Canon of the Scripture, were chiefly deſigned for thoſe times they were wrote in, and therefore we need not wonder, if they chiefly concerned the People that then lived; and that ſeveral Paſſages allude and relate to particular Times, Places, Perſons, Cuſtoms, Opinions, *&c.* which for want of a better Account of their remoter Ages and Countries cannot be equally inſtructive to us. *Secondly*, as ſome Parts of Scripture were deſigned for Ages paſt, ſo others probably may, eſpecially ſuch as are Prophetical, be deſigned for future Ages, who may underſtand them better than we do. And further, as the four laſt Books of *Moſes*, were deſigned to give Laws to the People, Eloquence and Rhetorick ought not to be expected in them, the Law-giver of the World reckoning Kings amongſt the reſt of his Subjects; and the Qualities moſt conſiderable in Laws, are Clearneſs & Majeſty. Beſides there are ſome Men ſo deſirous, as St. *Peter* 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. tells us, to look into the Myſteries of Religion, and of ſuch Elevated and Comprehenſive Intellects, that it is fit there ſhould be ſome Texts of Scripture

abſtruſe and above the reach of common Capacities, and ſuited for the Capacities of ſpeculative Wits, that the diſcoveries might exerciſe their Abilities, and reward their Induſtry. On the contrary, the Omniſcient Author knowing the weakneſs of a great many Men's Capacities, being weak and illiterate, it was his great Goodneſs to order it ſo, that other Paſſages ſhould be wrote in a plain and familiar Style, to let them know, that they were not forgot by him, who ſays by the Prophet, that all Souls are his, *Ezek.* 18. 4. And yet the plaineſt Texts will afford Inſtruction to the Learned; & as ſome contain Milk for Babies, and others Meat for riper Stomachs, ſo the ſame that affords Milk, may yield ſtronger Meat; as Cows furniſh us both with Milk and Beef. The Scripture ſays, *to him that hath ſhall be given*; and as fire ſerves both to warm, to dry, and dreſs Meat, ſo it enables a skilful Chymiſt to make Quinteſſences and Extracts.

Preſumption a great Cauſe of Men's finding fault with the Style of the Scriptures.

There are indeed a great many who find fault with this variety, God hath thought fit to declare his Will in, ſome complaining of Myſteries, and others of the plaineſs of other Texts. But the Pride of them that makes them, is commonly the Reaſon, they thinking the Bible ought to have been wrote chiefly to them, and ſuited to their Capacities, their Exceptions being ſuitable to their Preſumption; and as long as they call, what is above their Capacities dark, and all that ſuits it conſiderable; the holy Ghoſt's Expreſſions, will be cenſured either when he makes them clear, or when the Sublimity of the Subject makes them obſcure. Thus Bats have ſuch tender

tender Eyes, that they can neither bear the ſtrength of Day-Light, nor will the dark agree with them, but twilight which is both or neither. And as a Fowler takes different ways to catch different Birds, (which Compariſon may be admitted; ſince God is ſaid to be preſſed as *a Cart is preſſed that is full of ſheaves*, *Amos* 11.13. and the Son of Man is ſaid to be as *a Theif in the Night*.) ſo God knowing that Reaſon will work upon ſome People, Intereſt on others, and Terrours on others, and that others are to be gained by Imitation; his Wiſdom hath ſo diverſifyed his Doctrin, with Reaſon, Myſteries, Promiſes, Threats and Examples, that all ſorts of People may find Religion repreſented in the Forms, which are moſt likely to make Impreſſions on them; God Graciouſly dealing with his Children, as the Prophet, 2 *Kings* 4 34. who ſhrunk himſelf into the ſame Proportion with the Child he deſigned to revive. Men's Capacities and Inclinations are ſo different, and frequently extravagant, that there is ſcarce a Paſſage in Scripture, but what is ſuited to one or another, whom it was deſigned for, that variety of Occurrences, meeting with proper Objects. And ſince God beſt knows the temper of Mens Minds, and hath fitted them with proper Texts, I am not to find fault, if he ſoftens Myſteries to thoſe who cannot bear them in any other Language, and ſuits his Inſtruments to the Work they were deſigned for, leſt he ſhould ſay with the Houſholder in the Goſpel, *Is thine Eye Evil, becauſe mine is Good*? And it would be very unfit to find fault with God's Goodneſs, for the Attainments of Knowledg he hath vouchſafed us.

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A Reflection upon the foregoing Consideration.

From what we have ſaid, the Deſign and Intent of what we offer in Relation to the Text of Scripture will eaſily appear, *viz.* That as from ſeveral Texts of Scripture it appears, that it is written and approved by Men inſpired, ſo if a Man believes this, the Style of thoſe Books ought not to leſſen the value, nor make Men averſe to the Study of them. And further, the Scripture contains as much Eloquence as was requiſite for the purpoſe deſigned; and as we have the ſacred Books now, eſpecially in their Originals, they contain as much Eloquence as moſt of our Weſtern Nations, and ſuch as deſerves admiration.

Theſe Conſiderations being premiſed, which we may have occaſion hereafter to hint at, we ſhall proceed to Conſider the more particular Objections againſt the Scripture.

The firſt Objection Conſidered.

The Firſt Objection againſt the Style of the Scripture is, that it is obſcure. This is alledged by ſome, with a Deſign to diſgrace the *Bible*, and others only offer it as an Excuſe for not Studying it. To the *Firſt*, it may be anſwered, that it is almoſt inevitable, that ſeveral Texts of Scripture ſhould appear ſo, and that it is fit ſome ſhould be ſo. For *Firſt*, they want that ſenſe of many paſſages, which might be ſupplyed by skill in the Original Languages. Beſides, thoſe that take pains to underſtand them, come ſhort of the true ſenſe of ſeveral Words and Phraſes, a great Part of the *Hebrew* and *Chaldee* Languages being loſt. *Secondly*, many Texts of Scripture appear obſcure, for want of being acquainted with cotemporary Books of the Old Teſtament, and with the Hiſtory

History and Laws of the *Jews*, and their Customs, as well as of other Nations; ſo that it is no Wonder the Books of *Geneſis*, *Joſhua*, *Judges*, *Samuel*, *Kings*, *Heſter*, and other Hiſtorical Books of Scripture, as well as the four laſt Books of *Moſes*, ſhould be obſcure to us, though Intelligible enough to thoſe in whoſe times they were written. *Lucius Florus* would be very obſcure to thoſe that knew no more of the Roman Writings, than what appears from his own, yet he was eaſily enough underſtood by the *Romans* at that time. And that the Old Teſtament may be obſcure for want of contemporary Hiſtorians, is probable, ſince ſome Parts of the New Teſtament would not be well underſtood, without an Account of *Herod*'s Family, and what Alterations happened in *Judæa* about our Saviours time, ſometime Governed by *Herod*, and ſometimes by *Pilate*, and other Roman Magiſtrates, and ſometimes was divided under the Government of *Herod*'s deſcendants, under different Titles; which being Ignorant of, and ſeveral Princes that bore the Name of *Herod*, puzzles many Readers, Strangers to *Joſephus*. And many may think it ſtrange, that Chriſt ſhould, *Luk.* 21. v. 21,22. bid his hearers fly out of *Jeruſalem* and *Judæa*, and not rather reſort thither; when they ſhould ſee *Jeruſalem incompaſſed with Armies*. Whereas thoſe that know, that the Roman Forces under *Gratus* ſuddenly, without any Cauſe, withdrew from the Siege of *Jeruſalem*, and returning under *Titus*, took the Town by force; and thoſe alſo that have read *Euſeb. lib.* 3. *cap.* 5. and thoſe that further know, that the Chriſtians of *Jeruſalem*,

ſalem, divinely admoniſhed, quitted the City, and retired to *Pella* on the other ſide of *Jordan*, will underſtand the Reaſon of our Saviours warning, and admire his Prophetick Spirit: and as the Hiſtory of thoſe times cannot eaſily be collected out of the Old Teſtament, ſo thoſe Writings cannot give us compleat *Ideas* of Civil and Eccleſiaſtick Government of the *Iſraelites*, nor inform us of the true ſtate of their Sects, Opinions, and other Affairs in Religion, without the knowledg of which, ſeveral Texts will be obſcure to us, which were not ſo to thoſe that lived when thoſe Books were wrote. Indeed ſome Modern Criticks, by ſearching the Writings of thoſe *Rabbies*, who lived about our Saviours time, have cleared ſeveral Texts of Scripture, which were obſcure before, relating to ſeveral Sayings of the *Jews*, their Opinions and Cuſtoms, which are only ſuppoſed, and not taught in the New Teſtament; and a further Knowledg in that kind of Learning, will no doubt in ſome time clear thoſe Obſcurities, which yet remain upon ſeveral Texts of Scripture; and then all our Cavils and Fierce Contentions about them will appear Groundleſs; and I queſtion not but that ſeveral Criticks have left ſeveral Texts unexplained, or elſe perplexed them, for want of the Antient Learning of the *Zabians*, whoſe Magical Worſhip and Superſtitions, were oppoſed by ſeveral of the Ritual Laws of the *Jews*; and yet Claſſick Authors take no Notice of thoſe *Zabiiſts*, except *Maimonides*, from whom Mr. *Shelden* in his Tract of the *Syrian* Deities and in his familiar Diſcourſe gives us ſome Hints; from whom, and another Author of

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thoſe Parts, it is probable, that without the *Zabian* Rites and Creed, divers paſſages of the Moſaick Law will ſcarce be underſtood & many Paſſages of theNew Teſtament,for want of our Knowledg of thePractiſes and Perſwaſions of the *Gnoſticks*,*Carpocratians*,& otherSects,they are allayed to, are not ſo clearly interpreted, they having relation too, or clearly pointing at ſuch.

But further, ſome Texts of Scripture are obſcure and difficult, becauſe they were chiefly deſigned for the Uſe of future times,by whom they may be better underſtood. Many of the Verbal and Topical Predictions of the *Meſſias* ſeemed obſcure to the Jews long after *Moſes*'s time, which through the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſeem clear enough. And though the Myſterious Temple and City deſcribed in *Ezekiel*, a great part of the *Revelations*, as well as other Prophetick Paſſages of the Scriptures, appear abſtruſe to us, yet when they are compleated they will appear manifeſt; for though ſome Predictions are clearly expreſſed, ſo that the Events may be known before hand; yet the Events of others are not to be known till they come to paſs, ſo that the Accompliſhments ſhew, that he who foretold them, foreſaw them; *Theſe things have I told you, that when the time ſhall come, ye may remember that I told you of them*, *John* 26. 4. And further, it was requiſite,that ſome Paſſages in Scripture ſhould be obſcure, to keep thoſe things from the Knowledg of them, that would not take pains to underſtand them; and that others might excite and recompence the ſpeculations of elevated Wits, that inquired after them; and other Parts of Scripture

ture are difficult in reſpect of the things expreſſed, more than in the manner of expreſſing them; for beſides the Obſcurity of Prophetick Raptures, there are ſeveral things which may be known by the Light of Nature without Revelation, that our imperfect Intellects cannot ſufficiently underſtand, and notwithſtanding the cleareſt Expreſſions will ſtill remain obſcure; as the Nature of Time and Place, the Origin of Motion, and the manner of a Human Soul performing her functions, which are ſtill obſcure to the moſt inquiſitive Readers, notwithſtanding the endeavours of the beſt Writers to deliver them clearly. And if Natural Philoſophy contains ſuch Difficulties, no wonder that Texts of Scripture, concerning the Nature and Decrees of God, and the Myſteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Influence of the Spirit upon Human Souls, ſhould be difficult to be expreſſed, clearly enough to be comprehended by human Underſtandings, eſpecially if we do not ſufficiently proſecute the Study of them; and indeed ſome Texts are rendered more difficult by the Interpretations of thoſe that would expound them; for ſome are perſwaded and miſled by Metaphyſical Notions, or the Authority of Churches or Perſons they reverence, ſo that what is delivered in Scripture cannot be explained without ſuch Niceties, that beſides their own ſenſe, ſeem to retain the ſpeculations of him that quotes them; ſo that they repreſent ſeveral Texts which would be plain enough, full of inextricable difficulties, eſpecially to thoſe that cannot diſtinguiſh betwixt the Senſe of thoſe Texts, and their Metaphyſical Notions; which Niceties though

though contrived with a great deal of Wit, are ſo groundleſs, that a little Reaſon is ſufficient to ſhew the ſmalneſs of their Value; and ſome of them are ſo unintelligible, that they ſhew, that the Contrivers of them, either know not what they ſay, or mean not what they ſpeak; which Interpretations give no ſmall advantages to the Oppoſers of thoſe Doctrins, which relate to the Doctrin of Predeſtination, of the Trinity, and the Effects of the Spirit of God upon the Will of Man, and other Myſteries of the Chriſtian Religion; and perhaps theſe Metaphyſical Querks may occaſion ſome Men to oppoſe them, who otherwiſe would not. And I am apt to think, that theſe unintelligible Phancies, added to what the Scripture hath delivered concerning the Eternity and Infiniteneſs of God, hath given no ſmall Opportunities to Atheiſtical Wits; for when Metaphyſical Truths are interwoven with Revealed Ones, which perhaps cannot be proved, or ſo much as underſtood, thoſe who have Reaſon enough to perceive the grounndleſneſs of one Part, are apt to reject the other for the ſake of that.

The Second Objection againſt the Obſcurity of the Scriptures conſidered.

Thus much being ſaid, in reſpect of the firſt kind of Objectors, againſt the obſcureneſs of the Style of the Scriptures, we ſhall proceed to conſider the other ſort of Objectors; who becauſe they cannot underſtand the whole, will receive no information at all from it. And here we are to conſider, that thoſe Parts of Scripture which are ſo difficult to be underſtood, are not neceſſary to be ſo. And in the fundamental Parts of Scripture the darkneſs is like that of *Ægypt*, which involved the Enemies, but not the Peo-

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ple of God; for in thoſe points, *if the Goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt, in whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds*, 2 *Corinth.* 3. 4. and in this Caſe, we may apply that of *Moſes*, where he tells *Iſrael*, *This Commandment which I command thee this Day is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off* ——— *the Word is very near to thee, in thy Mouth and in thy Heart, that thou mayeſt do it. Deut.* 30 *v.* 11, 12, 13, 14. and ſince the Bible is *to enlighten the Eyes, and to make wiſe the Simple*, *Pſal.* 19. 7, 8. and wrote for the Uſe of the People of God in general, many of which are unlearned; whatever is wrote there carries along with it, evidence ſufficient to gain aſſent as far as is requiſite, and is as evident, as is neceſſary to make it ſufficiently underſtood; and what a Father ſaid of the Sacrament may be applyed upon this occaſion, *That not the wanting of it, but the ſlighting of it ſhall condemn Men*; therefore our Duty is to ſtudy them, though not to underſtand them. And as thoſe that are Obſcure are not abſolutely neceſſary to be underſtood; thoſe that are not, may be underſtood without much difficulty, & are more numerous than the others. And though ſome Lights in Scripture are ſo Myſterious, that they cannot, like ſome Stars be diſcerned without a Teleſcope, yet there are enough diſcernable to light us to Heaven. And if God in his Goodneſs hath made ſufficient Proviſion for our Inſtruction, we have no reaſon to complain, if that Book contains ſomething ſuited for higher attainments; and tho' ſuch are ſo obſcure, that we are able to learn nothing elſe from them, they may teach us Humility.

mility. Nor is inconſiſtent with the Goodneſs or Wiſdom of God, that that Book contains Exerciſe for the Induſtry of all ſorts of Readers; and makes it requiſite for the greateſt Capacities, to implore the Divine Inſtructions and Irradiations; having made ſome Paſſages to give us reaſon to be ſenſible of our weakneſs, as well as others, to ſtoop to it. And it ought rather to recommend than diſparage the Scriptures that what is revealed, is ſo copious and extenſive, that like a River, it will ſupply a Lamb with what may quench his Thirſt, and cannot be exhauſted by an Elephant. And as a Child that fed upon Milk, when grown up, would deſire ſtronger Victuals, ſo one young in Knowledg, having attained a greater Meaſure of skill in the Scriptures, will be deſirous to exerciſe his Underſtanding with more Myſterious Truths, which before were above his Capacity. And ſince there are ſo many Obvious Texts of Scripture containing all that is neceſſary to be known, and more perhaps than we take care to Learn and Practice, a Pious Chriſtian would not deny ſuch Heavenly Food, though the hard Places ſhould ſtill remain ſo, no more than a *Few* would deny to eat the Paſchal Lamb, *though not a Bone of it were to be broken*, Exod. 12. 46. and would not he deſerve Beggary, who ſhould refuſe the profit of a Mine, becauſe all in the World are not yet diſcovered, nor thoſe exhauſted in the Indies.

Obſcurity in the Bible no Argument againſt the Study of it.

But further, the pretended Obſcurity of the Bible, is no Argument againſt the ſtudy of it; ſince frequent reading muſt render it leſs obſcure; & as a miſt ſeems thicker at a diſtance than when one is in it, ſo thoſe pious Students, who have proſecuted their Studies, have found, that what ſeemed difficult at the firſt, & might diſcourage them, was not deſigned to fruſtrate their Induſtry, but to puniſh Lazineſs. And as the Scripture is the beſt Expoſitor of it ſelf; ſo the pains we take to enquire into the ſenſe of one Text of Scripture, which we are ſo ignorant of, leads us into the more perfect Knowledg of all the reſt: which puts me in mind of the dying Husbandman, who told his Sons of a hidden Treaſure buryed in his Vineyard, which occaſioned them to dig up all the Ground about the Roots of the Vines, which gave them a Treaſure in Wine, for that in Gold, they in vain ſought for; and thus hoping by Scriptures we underſtand, to explain thoſe we do not, we make our Knowledg more ready in thoſe we know; ſo that if we fail of our end one way, we meet with the recompence of our Pains another. And the Scripture is not only inſtructive as well as other Theological Writings, but we improve our Underſtandings by it, not only as it is a Means of Knowledg but of Grace; and as Sin came into the World by the Words of the Devil, ſo the Word of God introduced reſtoring Grace. So that the Searchers of the Scripture do, to their Underſtandings, as the Inhabitants of *Genezereth* did to their ſick and weak Country Men, *Mark* 6. verſe 56. who laying them in Jeſus's way, layed them in the way

way of recovery. It is ſaid, *bleſſed is he that readeth, and they that hear the Words of this Propheſy*, Rev. 1. 3. When the Enuch in the Acts read the Prophet *Iſaiah*, though then he underſtood not what he read, yet upon it the Spirit revealed Chriſt unto him, ſatisfying him of what the Prediction meant, and of it's Accompliſhment; and ſince this is the way God hath taken to convey his Truths and Graces to his Children, it ought to encourage us to ſearch the Scriptures, no means being more promiſing than Gods ways of promoting Grace. We may well depend upon God's Bleſſing according to his own Inſtitutions, ſince *whatever we ask according to the Will of God, he will give it us*, 1 John 5. 14. and nothing can be more agreeable to the Will of God, than to underſtand that Book which contains his Will. Nor ought the difficulty to deter us from the Duty of ſearching the Scriptures, God's moſt difficult Commands enabling believers to obey them; which St. *Peter* found by Experience, though wanting in his Part, our Saviours command enabling him to walk upon the Water, *Mat.* 11. v. 28. The Bible in reſpect of Books is, as Diamonds amongſt pretious Stones, as the moſt ſparkling, apteſt to ſcatter Light, and as the moſt ſolid, moſt likely to make impreſſions; but were it otherwiſe, our Saviour made uſe of Clay and Spittle to illuminate the Blind, *John.* 9. 6. And though I might eſteem the Bible, no more than other Books of Morality and Devotion, yet God's Deſign might give us more Encouragement to ſtudy it; ſince we may obſerve, that of the *Syrian* Leper, who would

have the Rivers of *Damaſcus*, *Abana* and *Parphar* as Medicinal as *Jordan* as if God's Appointment could not difference things, that knew none themſelves. Indeed the Scripture being compoſed of ſeveral obſcure Texts of Scripture mixed with clear ones, ſeveral devout Perſons have rather choſe to read other Books, which being free from thoſe difficulties might promiſe more Inſtruction; but as the Moon notwithſtanding her Spots gives more Light than the Stars that are all Luminous, ſo the Scripture notwithſtanding it's dark paſſages will afford a Chriſtian more Light than the beſt Authors. To conclude, ſince the Scripture is deſigned to convey revealed Knowledg to thoſe that ſtudy it, and the plainer Paſſages may inſtruct ordinary Readers, & it's more obſcure ones may afford Satisfaction to the more Inquiſitive, there can be no Reaſon, why ſome obſcure Parts ſhould deter pious Perſons from the Peruſal of the reſt. And as the Word is termed a *Light*, *Pſal.* 119. *ver.* 105. and *Prov.* 6. 13. ſo the worſt and plaineſt Ruſticks may by the benefit of it's Light direct his Ways: and the greateſt Philoſophers may be exerciſed with the abſtruſeſt Myſteries, ſo that the Ignorant may learn Knowledg, and the Wiſeſt find their Ignorance.

The Second Objection. But to proceed to the Second Objection againſt the Style of the Scripture. The ſeeming disjoynted Method of the Scriptures is much found fault with. Which were it true, the Book of ſacred Writ does but reſemble the Book of Nature, the Stars being as immethodically placed as the Paſſages of Scripture; and

and Flowers may make a good Poeſy, though found in never ſo confuſed an order. And indeed God Almighties Methods ought not to be confined to human Laws, which being deſigned for the narrowneſs of our Conceptions, might be improper and injurious to his, whoſe thoughts are ſo far above ours, ſo that as *the Heavens are higher than the Earth, ſo are his Thoughts higher than our Thoughts.* Iſa. 55. 8, 9. and as Ambergreeſe and Musk make a better ſcent than the ſingle Ingredients; and as the Compoſition of an Electuary makes a better Medicine than the ſingle Ingredients; ſo in Divinity and Morality, Precepts and Examples, Rhetorick and Myſtery complicated, have a better Effect than either of them ſingle. And it would be very Captious for a Man to refuſe a Summ of Money, becauſe Shillings, Sixpences, and half Crowns were not kept in diſtinct heaps, but mixed together. But not to urge this againſt a ſuppoſition which is not true; the Method of the Scriptures is Proper and Excellent, though not Pedantickly nice, the Order of Things being ſuited to the Authors End, never varying without a ſufficient Reaſon, or ſome Myſterious Purpoſe; Order in Scripture like that in Nature being altered for Man's Inſtruction. Whatever is amiſs in Scripture as to the Order of Hiſtory, is for particular Reaſons, and hath been approved by good Expoſitors. And the frequent Digreſſions in St. *Paul's* Epiſtles, were he a human Writer only, might be attributed to his writing full upon all Subjects, and not his unskillfulneſs in managing one; his Excurſions like thoſe of Generous Horſes, being occaſioned

more by his Metal than any thing elſe. And Rivers which tend towards the Sea, are often forced by riſing Grounds, which ſtop their way, to make ſeveral Windings, in which, though they may ſeem to retreat from what they tend to, yet they at the laſt find their way to it; and thus, though the Apoſtle, purſues his main ſcope, he may ſeem to quit it, by obviating ſome Objections, which being done, he reſumes his former Conſiderations, which grow the ſtronger, for confuting Scruples, that might interpoſe; the ſubject he chiefly aimed at, being illuſtrated and enriched by ſuch Excurſions. And St. *Paul*'s as well as other inſpired Writings appear with the greater Diſadvantages, for want of minding the Holy Ghoſts way of Writing. For when the Order of Time is Interrupted in the Hiſtorical Parts of Scripture, the προδύσεις, προλήψεις and ἐπάνοδοι, and other Diſlocations, are often made uſe of in complyance with the Connection of the Matter; and either make an end of whatever belongs to the ſame Narrative at once; or elſe to joyn Paſſages connected by other Paſſages, though different in thoſe of time. And ſometimes, what is inſerted, though not ſeemingly pertinent to the Series of Diſcourſe, is ſo in reſpect of the Authors Scope, and affords excellent Inſtructions to the Reader. Sometimes the Coherence of Things ſeemingly defective, appear plain, if the *Hebrew* Verbs are rendered in a Preterpluperfect inſtead of a Perfect Senſe, or ſome other Variation which the *Hebrew* Tongue allows, wanting ſeveral Moods and Tenſes of our Languages. Sometimes the Incoherency

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ſerves to prevent a probability of miſapplication, and hinders the Doctrin from being ſcrupled or abuſed. Sometimes the Prophets mix pathetical Excurſions with promiſes of Mercies, or Judgments pronounced againſt God's People, it being not unreaſonable to mention Chriſt along with them, who is the Ground and Foundation of them, the Promiſe made of which taught the faithful to reaſon with the Apoſtle. *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things*, Rom. 8. *ver.* 32. Sometimes the *Teacher*, that Biſhop of our Souls, *John* 13. ver. 13. 2 *Pet.* 11. 25. 1 *Tim.* 3. 2. who had all the Perfections of a Biſhop, being both fit and forwards to teach, takes an Occaſion to make Digreſſions for our Inſtruction, from ſome Word, Expreſſion or Theme, which interrupt the Original Subject. And ſometimes Inſpired Writings ſay, things ſeemingly contradictory, (as St. *Paul* in his Epiſtles ſeems to praiſe and diſpraiſe the ſame Perſons) addreſſes being made to mixed Aſſemblies, where there was both good and bad Men, Hereticks and Orthodox Chriſtians, their diſcourſe being ſo ordered, that both ſorts of Perſons might find Terms appropriated to them particularly, which their own Conſciences might apply. Sometimes the Diſorder in Scripture depends on the omiſſion or miſplacing a Parentheſis; for as there were none in the Original Hebrew or Greek Originals, the Tranſlators have placed them as they thought fit, ſome making long ones, and others ſhort ones, and ſome none at all, and moſt having left room for Corrections and A-

mendments. And not to mention the Antiquity of the new Teſtament; the Accents and Partitions of the old one; by inconvenient Diſtinctions of Chapters and Verſes, contrived by *Stephanus*; though it may be of uſe to the Memory, yet being drawn up in haſte, it may be no Injury to him, if we ſay, that he hath ſometimes ſeparated things that ſhould have been united, and ſometimes united Matters that ſhould have been ſeparated; and others ought not to be denyed the Liberty he took in making Partitions of the New Teſtament, in altering what Alterations he hath made to the Advantage of the Senſe and Method. And that the Scriptures may be reduced to a more perſpicuous Order, is evident, from the Analytical Works of ſome Expoſitors, conformable to the known Laws of Method; where the Diviner one does not excel them. And though the North Star be leſs luminous than others, yet is a better guide to Pilots than the Moon it ſelf, ſo ſome Texts of Scripture though not ſo plain in themſelves, in relation to a Context, are more inſtructive than more conſpicuous Paſſages, which they would be much inferior to, if they were not as valuable for their being there.

A Third Objection againſt the Style of the Scriptures anſwered.

Another Objection not much different from this is, that it is ſeldom coherent, and ſcarce any where diſcurſive. And this is a fault which too often happens amongſt pious Perſons, they looking upon the Scriptures as a Repoſitory of Sentences and Cauſes, as incoherent as *Nero* thought, *Seneca*'s Style, *viz. arena ſine calce.* Whereas it is evident to an Intelligent Reader, that the Prophets and Apoſtles make frequent deduc-

ons and inferences, and that their Arguments are as cogent as thoſe, that make Syllogyſms. And in my Opinion, St. *Paul*'s Reaſons are as ſolid and acute as *Ariſtotles*, according to that of *David*, *He that planted the Ear, ſhall he not hear? He that framed the Eye, ſhall he not ſee? He that teaches Men Knowledg ſhall he not know?* And ſure he that was the firſt and grand Author of Reaſon, might as well manage that Faculty of Reaſoning as thoſe that only receive it from him, being the *Father of Lights from whom each good and perfect Gift deſcends*, Jam. 1. 17. But to conſider ſome particulars on this occaſion.

Firſt, That ſome Raticionations continue miſunderſtood or undiſcerned, becauſe we are unacquainted with the figurative abrupt way of arguing amongſt the Eaſtern Countries; who in their arguing leave much to the diſcretion and collection of thoſe they dealt with, without making uſe of the Logical Forms of the *Epicureans*; which is evident from their writings. *Secondly*, A great deal of their incoherency proceeds from the falſe rendring of the Original Particles, eſpecially the Conjunction *Van* or *Vaf*, there being hardly any Particles without various ſignifications, beſides thoſe that are obvious; which if they were explained in the beſt ſenſe, the Scripture would appear more Coherent, and Argumentative than it is uſually repreſented: and if we conſider, that the Particle *Vaf* is uſed in four or five and twenty ſignifications beſides *And*; as but, or, ſo, when, therefore, yet, then, becauſe, now, as, though, *&c.* and that the ſenſe only gives it it's Acceptations, the different rendring of that Particle, would make a great

great many Texts better underſtood and more eſteemed. *Thirdly*, Sometimes, as in *Solomon's* and St. *Paul's* writings, ſome paſſages contain a ſort of *tacit* Dialogue, which though by ſome miſtaken for an Argument or Aſſertion, is really an Objection; which miſtake muſt needs diſorder the Contexture of a Diſcourſe. *Fourthly*, Miſplacing or Omitting Parentheſes, occaſions the Scripture often to appear diſcurſive as well as immethodical; and the ſame may happen by the miſuſe of Interrogation Points; for whether in the Original Greek Copies of the New Teſtament, there were any ſuch or no, yet the Moderns have, ſeveral of them, uſed them as they thought fit. And though the Hebrew Interrogative *He* is uſed inſtead of an Interrogative Point, yet the ſenſe of the Words and the ſuppoſ'd Sound often make an Interrogation without it, and an Hebrician cannot ſay that an Interrogation is always ſupplyed by the beſt advantage of the Scripture Logick. *Fifthly*, The Inſpired Writers often make uſe of Arguments to confirm Believers, more than to convince their Adverſaries; for thoſe they reaſon with being eſteemed Divine Teachers, and therefore what they teach being conſequently believed, they may uſe arguments to confirm them in what they believe, and of whoſe Integrity, Sufficiency & Authority, they are perſwaded, which would not be proper tourge againſt a refractory Unbeliever; & as Maſters uſe Arguments with their Scholars, which they would not offer againſt an Antagoniſt, ſo the Apoſtles who were believed to be inſpired, and to know the Myſteries of the Scriptures, and the intended Diſpenſations of God, might

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uſe other Arguments than what they would againſt an Infidel, they being ſuppoſed to be acquainted with the Mind and Counſel of God, more than other Men, and that they would teach nothing but what was ſo. *Sixthly*, Exquiſite Arguments would be leſs proper for Popular Auditories, than Popular ones; and more likely to prevail, than ſuch as none but *Logicians* could underſtand; for in teaching and perſwading, ſuch Reaſonings are to be uſed as are proportioned to the Spirits of them they are to influence; as a Spider may catch more flyes than a Hawk, and a Cat more mice than a Grey-hound; and the crowing of a Cock will ſooner fright a Lyon than a Bull; and ſo Popular Arguments ſooner prevail on a weak Auditory than Syllogyſtical ones. *Seventhly*, Tho' Scripture Arguments do not Logically, yet they prove conſequently from Principles confeſſed and allowed; ſo that though the Principles were invalid, their Reaſonings would not be ſo. Thus ſeveral Texts of Scripture in the Old Teſtament are applyed to Chriſt in the New, which though they ſeem not evidently againſt the preſent Jews, were plainly enough deſigned to oppoſe the antient Jews, the applications made of them in the new Teſtament ſhewing the relation they had to the Meſſias; whereas ſucceeding Jews had invented ſo many ſophiſtical Evaſions to elude thoſe Texts, that they now queſtion both the application, and alſo the explication. St. *Jude* argued out of the Story of the Devils and the Arch-Angels Conteſt about the Body of *Moſes*, with the *Rodomonts* in his time; and though but Apocryphal, yet being reverenced by them,

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it was looked upon, not irrationally urged to check their Insolence; and the Wind, which is fickle and inconstant, is observed to drive a Ship with more force than the strongest Engia in the World. And though popular Opinions and Perswasions are very groundless and uncertain, yet they are often used with good success; & good Arguers have made use of Inferences drawn from Mediums allowed by both Parties, as the most successful and perswasive way of arguing. *Eighthly*, The Reasonableness and Sense of Texts in Scripture hath often been obscured, by the unwillingness of Divines to let the Context and Scope of the Argument regulate their Choice of the significations of ambiguous Words and Phrases: yet Men of most Religions are apt to make use of such Phrases and Words as may favour their Turns; and decline the most common acceptations, to make the Text agree with their Positions rather than their neighbouring Texts; whereas it would be much better to make their Opinions consonant to Scripture, than to wrest the Scriptures, to make them consonant to their Opinions. But such an Impartial Interpretation of the Scriptures would soon put an End to Controversies, which hot spirited Men rather chuse to continue than put an end to.

But to proceed, the Bible looses much by not being considered as a System; for though several Books are like Cloath of which a Pattern is like, yet the Bible may be compared to a piece of *Arras*, of which though a shred may assure us of the fineness of the Colours, and the richness of the Stuff, yet it's greatest advantage appears when displayed at it's full Dimensions.

But

But notwithſtanding what we have ſaid in defence of the Coherence and Method of the Scriptures, yet I cannot deny but that there are ſome things, which my Reaſon cannot give a ſatisfactory Account of; but when I conſider how many things I once thought Incoherent which I afterward diſcerned the Connection of; and when I conſider the Ends of the Scripture and the Author; and when I conſider the Symmetry which Omniſcience already does, and future Ages will diſcover in the Scriptures, I cannot but check my inclinations that would pretend to know all the Ends of Omniſcience, or to judge of the fitneſs of his means for ends unknown to me: nor can I queſtion the Wiſdom of the Author, nor an Intereſt ſo unbyaſſed, that it would chuſe none but the fitteſt Method. Nor is it leſs a fault to conſider only the ſenſe of particular Sections, though each part of it ſhews it's Heavenly Extraction; but he that conſiders the whole Body of thoſe Canonical Writings, and ſhall compare them with one another, the Contexture will appear ſo admirable, that it will manifeſtly appear to be the Work of the ſame Wiſdom, that compoſed the Books of Nature, and the Fabrick of the World. The Books in Scripture expound one another; *Geneſis* and the *Revelations* being reciprocal Comments, and like the Mariners Compaſs, though the Needle ſtand North, yet it diſcovers both Eaſt and Weſt; and ſo do ſome Texts help to explain one another, though much diſtant in the Bible, and ſeem to be ſo in Senſe. It is a very great ſatisfaction to ſee how the ſacred Writers ſupply one anothers Omiſſions, according to the Degrees and Seaſons

Some thing which Reaſon cannot give a ſatisfactory Account of.

Seaſons that God diſpenſes the Knowledg of his Truths and Myſteries in the different Ages of the Church (at the firſt vouchſaving, but a *light ſhining in a dark place until the Day dawning*, 2. *Pet.* 1. 39.) and to find ſo much Harmony betwixt Writers, ſeparated by ſo much time and place; their differences ſerving only to ſhew the ſincerity and uprightneſs of the Writers. And for my part, I read the Sacred Authors and their Expoſitors with an Impartial Aim, having no deſign to prove any Articles by the Scripture, but rather chuſing to deduce my Opinions from it, than to wreſt them to prove my Opinions; nor do I neglect thoſe Arguments or Paſſages, which confirm the Doctrin of the Church I adhere to; yet only chuſing ſuch Paſſages as may ſolidly juſtify my Thoughts, and as may raiſe in me a Reverence for the Scripture and Chriſtianity in General; obſerving chiefly ſuch things as may confirm the Articles clearly diſcovered in the Bible, and ſhew the Excellent Majeſty of the great Author, and *the manifold Wiſdom of God*, *Epheſ.* 3. 10. which even Angels themſelves learn by the Church. Nor do I think any pains miſpent that tend to eivnce that great Truth; that the Scriptures are the Word of God; and I uſe not the Scripture to defend the Opinions only of particular Parties, but to contemplate the Beauty, Symmetry and Magnificence of the Compoſure, and to excite my Devotion to the Duty there preached and adored.

The Fourth Objection conſidered.

But to proceed to the fourth Objection, which is, that ſome Texts are ſeemingly impertinent or uſeleſs. We are told, that the *whole Scripture*

ture is divinely inſpired, and is profitable for Doctrin, for Conviction, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs; that the Man of God may be perfect, throwly furniſhed unto all Good Works? 2 *Tim.* 3. 15, 16. and another Apoſtle tells us, that *Propheſy came not of old time by the will of Man, but holy Men of God ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt,* 2 *Pet.* 1. 21. So that we cannot think, that Divine Writers who were inſpired, and Eminent for Gifts of Propheſy or Miracles, would publiſh any thing for the Uſe of the Church that was Impertinent or Uſeleſs; and yet ſome more Bold than Learned, are too forwards to impeach the Scripture with ſuch Qualities; but that God who was ſo exact in building the Antient Tabernacle, which was but Typical, would not impoſe things unneceſſary, when what he did was deſigned for the Inſtruction and Service of the Church; the leaſt Text being as requiſite to compleat the Bible as every portion of the Tabernacle was to finiſh that. God, who had ſo much condeſcention to the weakneſs of Mankind, as to withold ſo many of *Solomon*'s Writings from the Canon, and ſo many of our Saviours Oracles and Miracles; and by preſerving the whole Scripture, ſufficiently ſhews he had no deſign of denying any thing that was fit for his Peoples Inſtruction, or burthening them with any thing unneceſſary; and if it were not too tedious, it might eaſily be ſhewn, that ſeveral Texts which are imagined to be ſo, are not uſeleſs; ſeveral Texts which at the firſt ſight appear uſeleſs, upon further examination proving themſelves as pregnant as the reſt, and inſtead of trivial, myſterious. And if the Scripture

ture is ſo pretious, that none of it ought to be eſteemed uſeleſs; it may improve the Underſtanding of Divine Truths of greater value than the Knowledg of other things. And as the Scripture was wrote for the whole Church Militant of all Ages and Nations; as many Texts were at the firſt neceſſary for the *Jews*, as were requiſite in Oppoſition to the Magical Rites of the *Zabeans*, which to us are not ſo uſeful, and perhaps many that are uſeleſs to us, may be ſerviceable to future Ages, and perhaps controul ſome Hereſy as yet not foreſeen, or confound ſome Error that hath not yet been made. So that every part of Scripture is uſeful in ſome Age, and ſome of them are ſerviceable in all. At the firſt Inſtitution of the Sacrament it was ſaid to the Diſciples, *Drink ye all of it*, *Mat.* 16. 27. but upon giving the Bread *all* was left out. *Mar.* 14. 23. The Primitive Chriſtians knowing no Reaſon for which they might think it uſeleſs; but we, who ſee the Cup denyed to moſt Communicants, not only record, but admire this Particularity. The Ceremonial Law with it's Myſtical Rites, to many ſeems not worth Reading, like the Manger to the Shepherds, which held Jeſus wrapped in Swadling Cloaths, *Luke* 2. yet it was made uſe of by the Apoſtles, againſt the Jews, and the Knowledg of it is ſerviceable to us. And ſuch fundamental Controverſies are more worthy a Wiſe Man's ſtudy, than a great many trifling ones which puzzle Chriſtendom. Many paſſages of the Prophets, like the Star in the Eaſt, lead attentive Readers to Chriſt, *Mat.* 2. and with *Moſes*'s Typick Shades ſay with the Baptiſt, *behold the Lamb of God that takes away*

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the Sins of the World, which careleſs Readers think uſeleſs; and ſeveral Paſſages of the New Teſtament concur with the Narrative of our Saviours Apprehenſion, *All this was done, that the Scriptures of the Prophets might be fulfilled*, Mat. 26. 56. or rather that they were fulfilled, the Context often directing us to render ἵνα ſo. And this puts me in mind of the Hiſtory of the Transfiguration; for as the Apoſtles *ſaw Moſes and Elias talking with Jeſus*, and ſoon after *ſaw none but Jeſus only*, Mat. 17. 3, 8. ſo ſeveral Paſſages in the Prophets, *&c.* at firſt appear very different, which afterwards, all end in Chriſt *Of whom Moſes in the Law and the Prophets did Write*, John 1. 55 and whom all the Types and Predictions were intended for; the confuſed Pedigrees and Stories in the Old Teſtament were Uſeleſs and Troubleſom to the Antient *Jews* but ſerve us to prove the Authority of the the New Teſtament, againſt the *Jews*, becauſe the Antient ſtrain uſed in the Old Teſtament, is uſed by the Holy Ghoſt in the Narrative of St. *Stephen*, and the Geneology of the *Evangeliſts*. And as there are ſeveral Paſſages in the *Revelations*, which we are Ignorant of, which Poſterity may know the meaning of, when once the Accompliſhment ſhall prove the Predictions of the Inſpiror, ſo moſt of the old *Jews* ſcarce knew ſeveral Moſaick Conſtitutions which we make uſe of; and the Modern *Rabbies* decline refering the Myſterious Laws of *Moſes* to the *Meſſias*, making little more of them than the *Ægyptians* or *Gymnoſophiſts* could of their Sacrifices and Ritual Devotions.

Some Parts of Scripture more uſeful than others.

Yet I think not all the Books contained in the Bible equally uſeful, becauſe equally inſpired; nor do I think the Prophecy of *Nahum* as ſerviceable as that of *Iſaiah*, nor the Book of *Ruth*, equally uſeful with the Epiſtle to the *Romans* or the Goſpel of *John*; yet I Judge all the Books of Scripture requiſite to the *Cannon* as the Parts of the Body are to make up the Whole. And as the leaſt of the Stars are luminous Bodies and bigger than the Earth, ſo though there is difference in the two Teſtaments, yet they are both Inſtructive, and as inſpired, more eſtimable than the writings of meer Men; and as the Ground which covers Mines is leſs fruitful and flouriſhing, ſo thoſe Texts of Scripture which ſeem barren, if further ſearched into, contain rich and pretious Myſteries in the Bowels of them.

A Fifth Objection conſidered.

The next Objection againſt the Scriptures is, that they contain many things Trivial and Impertinent, as abrupt Tranſitions and Speeches in many of our Saviours Diſcourſes; he ſometimes likewiſe, anſwering Queſtions without being asked, and ſometimes giving Anſwers quite different to the Queſtion. But this was rather an Excellency in Chriſt, who could diſcern Hearts, and whoſe Oratory had a ſhorter Effect than ours, altering his Diſcourſes and adapting his Sermons with reſpect to the End; and as he knew their thoughts, he anſwered them before they had time to paſs to the Tongue. And his deſpiſed Parables, include Excellent Moralities and Propheecies. As the Parable of the Muſtard Seed, *Mat.* 13. 31,32. foretold the ſwift Progreſs of the Goſpel, which from

from a ſmall beginning, became a Wonder, as well as an Object of Faith. And the Parable of the Treacherous Husband-man, *Mat.* 11. 33. foretold the Malice of the *Jews*, and Chriſt's Death, as well as their Deſtruction; and no doubt but other Propheſies will be further diſcovered which are yet unregarded. And thoſe Circumſtances in Chriſt's Parables, like the Feathers of an Arrow, promote it's flight and convey it to the Mark.

Repetitions in Scripture anſwered for.

But ſome blame frequent Repetitions in Scripture, which like the Stars, though they all are looked upon as equal by the vulgar, yet they have particular Influences, beſides their Light, aſſigned by Aſtrologers; beſides there are cuſtomary Expreſſions in all Languages, which tho' they ſeem ſuperfluous are not abſurd, but Proprieties of Speech and Emphetical. Beſides thoſe Books being wrote at different times, the Repetition of the ſame Sins and Miſtakes made the threats and diſwaſions as neceſſary, according to that, ſaying, *nunquam ſatis docetur; quod nunquam ſatis diſcitur*, and as repeated ſtrokes are requiſite to drive a Nail to the Head, according to that as Nails faſtened by the Maſters of Aſſemblies, ſo frequent reproofs are fit to convince obſtinate ſinners. And as in other Authors varyed Repetitions are but Matter in different Words, ſo in Scripture the ſame Words generally comprize new Matter. And as the Sophiſtry of Hereticks is apt to elude ſeveral Texts of Scripture, ſo the Fundamentals of Faith are delivered in ſuch a Variety of Expreſſions, that if one is eluded, another may eſcape; ſo that many Articles are thus confir-

med by two or three witneſſes; our Anchor of hope by this means being tyed to a threefold *Cord which is not eaſily broken.* And as in *Pharoah*'s Dream, the Ears and the Kine ſignifyed the ſame thing, *Gen.* 4. 25, 31. *Joſeph*'s Interpretation ſhews there was nothing ſuperfluous; and the Repetitions of ſome Points ſhew the importance of ſome preceding, thoſe repetitions being like the leaves of a Roſe, which concur to make up the Flower.

A Sixth Objection conſidered.

I know the *Keri* and the *Cethib*, and *Tikkin Sophirim* in the old Teſtament, and the *variæ Lectiones*, of the Hebrew in the Old, and the Greek in the New Teſtament; nor am I unacquainted with the Difficulties about reconciling the Texts in the former, and of thoſe ſacred Inſtruments in the later, where they ſeem to differ much from the Old Teſtament both in Words & Senſe; but this hath been already conſidered by others, and our preſent deſign is only intended to defend the Style of the Scripture, not the Truth and Authority of it; only we ſhall obſerve, that the Prepoſſeſſions and Intereſt of Expoſitors, rather than the Aſpects of the Texts of Scripture make thoſe Books ſeem ſo full of Contradictions; Intereſted Perſons and byaſſed Judgments wreſting Paſſages of Scripture to countenance their prejudices, though they make thoſe Texts diſagree with one another to make them comply with their partial Interpretations. Thus *Ariſtotle*'s Phyſical Writings are urged by different Parties, to countenance their Opinions; and the different Sects of *Mahometans* vary as much about the Senſe of the *Alcoran* as we do about the Bible; ſo that *ſome things hard*

to

to be underſtood, in St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles, 2 *Pet.* 3. 16. and other Parts of Scripture are ſaid by St. *Peter*, by the *unlearned and unſtable wreſted to their own Deſtruction.* When Words are taken in their obvious Acceptation, except the Context ſhews reaſon to the contrary, they are eaſily underſtood; but when prejudiced Wits make an Author ſpeak their Senſe inſtead of his own, and conſidering the different Acceptation of Words and Phraſes make uſe of that which beſt ſerves their own turn; and becauſe it hath ſuch a Signification in other places, it muſt have the ſame in this, he muſt be very cautious, that prevents his Words from being taken in a different Senſe from his own. Thus our Laws which were deſigned to prevent ſtrife, and are expreſſed in plain Words, are ſo perverted by ſome Wits, that private Mens Caſes are not only puzzled, but Princes and Subjects vary, and Kill and Execute one another. And thus in Scripture, we often impute our own Faults and Deficiencies to it; but the beſt way to prevent that is, not to quarrel about Niceties, ſince anſwering their Objections convinces them not of their Incredulity; and by Juſtifying the Truth of the Scriptures, we only ſhew our Reverence to them, without making them the better for it; but the only way is to aſſert the Truth of the Scriptures as of a Divine Origin, which gives Men Reaſon to impute their Scruples to their own Miſtakes, as when our Saviour uttered a dark ſaying, which puzzled his Diſciples, they did not forſake him, but *St. Peter* in the Name of the reſt ſays, *Thou haſt the Words of Eternal Life, and we be-*

lieve, and are ſure that thou art the Chriſt, the Son of the Living God, John 6. 60, 66, 68, 69. Where one comprehenſive Truth was ſufficient to ſilence Particular Scruples.

And one thing further may be conſidered; that the Truth of the Scriptures, and that they are not contradictory to themſelves, hath been believed by the moſt Learned Men in the World, who have for their own Satisfaction examined them, and to find out the Truth; and though they diſcovered difficulties which theſe Complainants never thought of, yet they all believe the Scriptures to have Reaſon enough to lay a Foundation for our Faith; which wants ſome Reluctancy in the Underſtanding to make it a Vertue acceptable to the Will; Faith being like a Twilight, a Mixture of Darkneſs being neceſſary to both; one vaniſhing into Knowledg, as the other does into Day. And Chriſt often deals with new Believers, as he did with *Nathaniel*, who when the Innocent *Iſraelite* had Acknowledged him the *Meſſias*, diſcerning him under the Fig-Tree, our Saviour told him, *Becauſe I ſaid unto thee, I ſaw thee under the Fig-Tree, believeſt Thou? Thou ſhalt ſee greater things than theſe*, John 1. 50. So that when Men believe the Divinity of the Scriptrue, and that Faith is ſo acceptable to God, he often gives them ſtronger Arguments to confirm it, than thoſe which firſt laid the Foundation of it, and lets them know how Reaſonable it is they ſhould ſubmit their Reaſon to the Author of it. Thus our Saviour, when the blind Men had got Faith, preſently opened their Eyes, *Mat.* 9. 27.

It

The Seventh Objection against the Style of the Scriptures conſidered.

It is an Objection amongſt ſome who obſerve the Repetitions and the Divine Methods of delivering their Truths, that the Bible is a Book ſo Barren, that Inſtructions are but ſparingly ſcattered, in compariſon of other Books, where Repetitions are not uſed, and where the Matter is delivered in fewer Words; wherefore many Religious Perſons rather chooſe to read other Books of Devotion and Morality, as fuller of Inſtruction and Good Precepts.

What hath been already ſaid may be ſufficient to anſwer this Objection, however we ſhall propoſe on this occaſion ſome Conſiderations.

The firſt Conſideration on this Occaſion.

The Firſt Conſideration on this occaſion is, that though the Excellent Doctrin, contained in the Scriptures, were but like Golden Ore, contained in leſs pretious Materials, yet it would like thoſe, deſerve to be enquired into; and he who found *a Treaſure hid in the Field*, Mat. 13. 44. thought not much to purchaſe the whole Field for the ſake of it. But, thanks be to God, it is only our Ignorance or want of Pains that makes the miſtake, it being more like the Land of Promiſe, *flowing with Milk and Honey*, where *the Lord God made to grow every Tree that is pleaſant to the Sight, and good for Food, the Tree of Life alſo in the midſt of the Garden*, Gen. 2. 9. And as the Author is Omniſcient, ſo the more knowing and ſtudious any of them is, the more Truths he diſcovers in it; for a Book may be Inſtructive, as it contains Speculative Truths as well as Practical ones; and we ought to be informed as well what God would have us think of him and his Works, as what he would

have them do. And as the moſt elevated Subjects are ſuch as have God for their Object, ſo no Book can tell us better the Nature and Thoughts of God than the Bible; nay, no other Book can tell us any thing of ſome of thoſe Sublime Subjects, except the Bible. So that a Book can hardly be looked upon to be Barren, which contains ſo many revealed Truths, which are of ſo Noble a Nature, that ſeveral Heathen Authors, are valued for gueſſing at a few of them, though allayed with ſome erroneous Opinions.

The Scripture a great Promoter of Piety and Vertue.

But ſince thoſe we diſpute with, prefer other Books in reference to good Life, we are to conſider, that there are other things requiſite to make a Man live well, than to tell them what to do and how they ought to do it; it being requiſite, in order to live a good Life, that we overcome our Appetites and Inclinations: beſides Perſeverance is attended with Hardſhips and Dangers, ſo that good Precepts only are not ſufficient to engage a Man to a good Life, which inclines them not to conform to Precepts that are good, but only ſerve to make them believe them ſo. But it is much more valuable to give as the Scripture does, the moſt prevalent Motives of Piety and Vertue, and Diſwaſives from Vice, and promiſes of Rewards and Puniſhments according to our Actions. Now as the Bible is furniſhed with good Precepts, and alſo thoſe ſtronger Motives, which no Book can do, that is not Divinely inſpired; ſo we have no Reaſon to believe meer Man, ſo much as God himſelf, what he promiſes or threats depending on his free Will, which cannot be known without

out Revelation, which is, contained in no other Book but the Bible. And therefore *St. Paul* might well aſcribe to our Saviour, *That he had brought Life, and Immortality to Life through the Goſpel*, 2 Tim. 1. *v.* 10. And as Hope is the greateſt Motive to engage Men in a Vertuous Life, *St. Peter* ſays, a Chriſtian Hope depends on a revealed Truth, and thanks God, who *according to his abundant Mercy, begot us to a lively Hope, by the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the Dead*, 1 Pet. 1. 3. And what hopes, through the Influence the Scripture gives us of the Knowledg of God and Chriſt, we may have of a good Life, and through the Promiſes which none but he can make, or thoſe that he ſent, will appear from the ſame Apoſtle, who ſays, that God *according to his Divine Power gives unto us all things that pertain to Life and Godlineſs, through the Knowledg of him that hath called us to Glory and Vertue.* 2 Pet. 1. 2, 3, 4 and he after tells us of being made *partakers of the Divine Nature, eſcaping the Corruption that is in the World through Luſt*, by thoſe Promiſes God hath made us. So that if the Scripture without Precepts of Morality, taught us a Good Life, only by what God hath revealed of himſelf, and by affording us Motives to purſue a good and to avoid a bad Life, which Revelation alone can make Men depend on; I ſay, if we were only thus to be engaged to a good Life, and to owe the Precepts of Vertue to the Laws of Nature, and the Power of our Reaſon, the Scripture ought yet to be looked upon as the moſt Inſtructive Book to a good Life, the writings of Philoſophers and Orators never making ſo many

ny Perſons vertuous as the New Teſtament. The Moon indeed may afford a Gardiner Light to dig his Ground, and prune his Trees, but will never contribute to produce Fruit like the Sun, which both affords Light and gives him hopes that his Labour and Toyl ſhall be rewarded.

As alſo of Morality. But though for theſe Reaſons, the Scripture might be looked upon as a great promoter of Piety and Vertue, yet it is not deſtitute of Morality. For as it is neceſſary, that the Perſon that embraces the Goſpel, ſhould be endowed with two ſorts of Vertues, *viz.* Chriſtian and Moral, ſo the Rules proper for Chriſtian Vertues, no doubt are contained in Scripture; that Book being ſo full of them, that it often gives a great deal of Inſtruction in ſaying Nothing; and it wants not Precepts, Exhortations, and Diſwaſives, of as much value as thoſe in Books of Ethicks, though they are not ranged in Syſtematrical Compoſures in the ſame Order; for in the Scriptures, Moral Precepts are every where ſcattered with Motives to thoſe Duties, and Diſwaſives from the oppoſite Vices. And I have often wondered at Morals in Heathen Writers, only directing to regulate Paſſions and regulate their Faculties, in order to Felicity, they having been treated on only by ſuch as very little underſtand the Nature of the Faculties, and Paſſions of the Mind. Whereas the Author of the Scripture knowing the frame and faculties of our Souls, the moſt proper ways of working upon them cannot be unknown to him. And as for thoſe Vertues which are moſt ſtrictly Moral, there are a great many Notions and Directions

ctions in Scripture in reference to them which are not ſo much taken Notice of by common Readers, becauſe mixed with other Matters, which are eaſily diſcovered by diligent ſearchers of the Scriptures. Therefore thoſe who neglect the Scriptures upon ſuppoſition of their wanting rules of Morality, wrong themſelves as well as the Scriptures; and therefore Men's Practices are to be cenſured, rather than the Sacred Writings. Nothing could raiſe in me a higher eſteem for *Luther*, than when he wiſhed all his Writings burnt, becauſe the overvaluing of them made the People neglect the Study of the Bible. Here we may apply the ſaying of *Seneca* to our preſent purpoſe, *Paribus Intervallis omnia Divina, ab omnibus humanis diſtant. Conſ. ad Helviam. Cap.* 9. the beſt of Authors, like the Stars being drowned by the greater Luſtre of the Sun; the Bible being like the Fountain from whence thoſe other Streams of Devotion flow; and it ſeems unwiſe to chuſe to read God's Word rather in any Book than his own. St. *Paul* in reſpect of the Uſefulneſs of the Scripture, ſays, *That it can make the Man of God perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all Good Works, and is able to make us Wiſe unto Salvation*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 17. Other Books indeed give us inſtructions to help us to the attainment of Advantages, Conveniences, and other Ornaments of Life, which only reſpect particular Ends; but that Knowledg, which reſpects eternal Happineſs or Miſery, is only to be ſought in Scripture, that being ſufficient to teach us the Duty of Faith and Life; and though to underſtand the Bible, it is neceſſary to underſtand a great many other Books, yet it is ſufficient

ſufficient to Salvation, though others are not. Had St. *Peter*'s Viſion been reality, he needed not to range the Woods and Foreſts for Objects of Appetite, a Veſſel being let down from Heaven with enough of all kinds to ſatisfy his hunger, with a Command *Riſe*, *Kill* and *Eat*. And when God hath given us a compleat Volume of Truths which are ſparingly collected out of other Books, it ought to be prized by a Chriſtian for being ſo comprehenſive. That Book hath ſufficient Precepts and Motives for us, if believed and conſidered as they ought to be; and it is unreaſonable to think that a Book of Ethicks, wrote according to the Rules of Logick, and furniſhed with Diviſions, Diſtinctions, and Definitions, ſhould be ſufficient to make a Man Vertuous; as if Vertue were to be Learned like Grammar; for without Rational Motives to Vertue, and ſomething to deter us from Vice, and other things to influence our Minds and Manners, the Ethical Writers fall into diſputes extrinſecal to Vertue and Vice, and ſpend more time about their Method, than the Prerogative of the former above the later, and are more concerned in contriving their Chapters than in directing Men's Actions; influencing our Memories rather than our Affections, and enable us better to diſpute about Paſſions, than with them. And as it is more preferable to be a Monarch of one Kingdom or Province, than to be a Geographer, and to be able to ſurvey and divide the whole Superficies of the Globe, ſo the Poſſeſſion of one Vertue is better than the ſpeculative Knowledg of them all. And *Ariſtotle* had been more plain and leſs Pedantick,

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had he been more nice in the Method of his Ethicks; a little Theory well underſtood & practiſed being ſufficient to make a Man Vertuous, ſince Reaſon and Diſcretion may ſufficiently apply it to the Occurrences of Life; and Syſtems of Morality may reaſonably be compared to the Stars in the Firmament, which are obvious to all Eyes, and ſufficiently Light us in our ways; and though I as well as others by the help of a Teleſcope have obſerved a hundred Stars in the Pleiades, beſides thoſe to be diſcerned by the naked Eye, and likewiſe a great many ſmall ones in the Milky Way and other Parts of the Firmament, yet we receive no more Light from the Firmament than others, ſo General Maxims in Ethicks are uſeful in affording us Directions; but the ſmall Scholaſtick Notions, though pleaſant, afford us but little Light to guide our Actions by, though the ſpeculative Part is delightful. When Examples firſt ſuggeſted Precepts of Vertue, before any were wrote, or the Definition of it talked on, Vertue was as much practiſed as ever.

The Precepts of Vertue in the Bible of more Importance than others.

The Precepts of Vertue are very fruitful, and if well practiſed increaſe and multiply. And as for Motives to Piety, and Diſwaſives from Vice, though a great many may be collected out of Books of Morality not contained in the Bible, yet an inquſitive ſearcher will find more there, than a great many are able to diſcern, and of ſuch Importance that one of them is of more value than a great many ſmall ones, and may include ſeveral inferior Inducements, as a large piece of Money does many ſmall ones. And though Human Authors with all their Flouriſhes and

and Ornaments, cannot prevail on their Readers or Themſelves, yet the Perſwaſives and Inducements in the Bible without the help of Art, if ſeriouſly conſidered, are able to raiſe Vertue to a high Pitch, as appears by the Primitive Ages of the Church. And indeed in Moral Diſcourſes, however they may extend their Boughs, the Root is but ſmall; and further, what one Writer compares to one thing, another compares to another; thoſe ungrateful Perſons to God, which one compares to Swine, who eat the Acorns without looking up to the Tree they fall from; another to Cattle, that drink the Stream without conſidering the Spring they riſe from. Thus Vertue in ſeveral Dreſſes, gains the Attention of eaſy and flexible Natures, tho' conſidering Perſons can ſee through their Diſguiſes; but ſuch Perſons will not find fault with the Motives and Determents contained in Scripture, becauſe old and known; nor for the Repetition of them, if their Effects are repeated too, no more than Men will refuſe the Uſe of Bread, becauſe it hath been long uſed, and is the common Food of all Nations. Nor can Repetitions be ſuppoſed more unreaſonable, where occaſion requires, than it would be for a Souldier to draw his Sword, becauſe it had been drawn ſeveral Years before. Or for a General to encourage his Army with the Motives of Honour, Duty, Spoil, Neceſſity, *&c.* which are commonly uſed on ſuch Occaſions.

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To what we have ſaid we ſhall add, that God being an Omniſcient Spirit, and Lawgiver to all Mankind, the Truths, Counſels, Exhortations, *&c.* we find in Holy Writ, ought to have a greater Effect and Preference, as being found there, than if the ſame were found in any Writings of Heathen Moraliſts, though never ſo Learned, eſpecially by a Chriſtian Reader. And thoſe who ſo much reſpect the Writings of the Antient Wits, becauſe they believed thoſe that diſcovered thoſe Truths, were furniſhed with extraordinary Intellects, ought to pay a proportionable reſpect to the Omniſcient Author, ſince Men *are but of Yeſterday and know little or nothing*, which are the Words *Elihu* in *Job*. A Cautious Perſon not only examins the Meaning but the Truth of what he Reads, but in the Bible we have but one trouble, which is to know the meaning, ſince that Book never deceives us of the Truth, but when we think we underſtand it before we do. It hath a greater Influence on me, to find the Vanities of the World, proclaimed by one that enjoyed all the Pleaſures of it, than if the ſame Truth were delivered by a beggarly Cynick, that never taſted of them; for a little ſhare of Philoſophy may make him deſpiſe that, which the Narrowneſs of his Fortune would never allow him to enjoy; his finding fault with it, being like a Blind Man's finding fault with a Blackamore, who can only know that ſhe is ugly becauſe he is told ſo, and would make but an indifferent Witneſs to prove it. Thus when God is pleaſed to declare what is Vertue or Vice, Sublime or Deſpicable, Happineſs or Miſery, I rather believe it, than if frail

Truths in Scripture ought to be prefered to the ſame found in other Books.

frail Man ſubject to miſtakes, ſhould atteſt the ſame. And it muſt be a great aggravation, to ſlight God's Truths and Dictates as they are his; ſince our Saviour prefered thoſe *Ninevites*, which repented not at the Preaching of *Jonah* to thoſe which did, becauſe he was *a greater than Jonah*, *Mat.* 12. 42. And though I have formerly taken Pains to peruſe Books of Morality, yet ſince they have only a Power to perſwade, but not to command; and Sin and Death do not neceſſarily attend the diſobedience of them, they have the leſs influence; for ſince we may take the Liberty to queſtion the reaſonableneſs of Human Writers; I find, that the Methods they take to impoſe their Writings upon us, may ſerve to countenance either Truth or Falſhood. And indeed Moraliſts, excepting thoſe Duties which Nature, or our Curioſity in enquiring into times and places have taught us, ſeem rather to fence with Wit; their Popular Topicks being built upon ſuch uncertain Foundations, that they with as much probability may be overthrown as defended; and our Corruptions prove Sophiſters ſufficient to deny that a Duty, they have no Mind to comply with. But when any thing is commanded by the Scriptures, being conſcious that it is the Will of that *Father of Spirits*, *Heb.* 12. 9. I diſpute not to obey his Orders, and comply more with his αὐτὸς ἔφη, *thus ſaid the Lord*, than with *Plato's* Dialogues, or *Seneca's* Epiſtles. Thoſe Ethicks have the trueſt foundation, which are built upon the true Senſe of the Scripture, and have the greateſt Influence both on Faith and Practice, Gods Will being no where to be better Learned than where it is Revealed. And

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as this right of Obedience requires it from me, I take the Liberty to examin what God ſays, without confiding in what Men, by their Interpretations, may make him ſay; conſidering the Senſe of the Text, without the Gloſſes of Interpreters, or even of the Fathers. And amongſt bare Moraliſts I would examin and diſtinguiſh how far what they ſay is conſiſtent with Reaſon, as well in reſpect of the Inducements, as the Nature of what they offer, being unwilling to be cheated into Vertue, without the Liberty of acting as a Rational Chriſtian.

Whence Divine Inſtructions are to be taken.

The *Jews* in the thirteen Articles of their Creed, affirm every Expreſſion of the Law to be divinely inſpired; and that upon each Tittle of the Law whole Mountains of Doctrin depend. I ſhall not mention as proof of this, their ſtrange accenting of the Ten Commandments; nor ſhall I urge that they reduce the Precepts of the Law to 613 Affirmative and Negative, anſwering the number of the Letters of the Decalogue; as if all that was requiſite to Man's Redemption was virtually implyed there; and I have ſometimes ſuſpected, that all the Precepts relating to the Duty of Man had their riſe thence. But not thence to urge the Inſtructiveneſs of the Scripture, I ſhall obſerve, that there are many Inſtructions, and Truths delivered, Errors convicted, and Myſteries expreſſed, which are hid to the Vulgar; which may eaſily be diſcerned by an Inquiſitive Searcher. God is ſaid *to cover himſelf with Light as with a Garment*, Pſal. 104. 2. which Juſtifyes the firſt Words he ever ſpoke, *Gen.* 1. 3.

Let there be Light, which Words in the Original are both Emphatical and often Myſterious. And the Apoſtle tells us, *Rom.* 15. 1. *whatſoever things were written were written for our Learning*, The Scripture containing more Matter than Words, whilſt Human writings abound more with Words than Matter; the Bible being like the Tree of Life, which not only yielded Fruit, but the *Leaves were for the Healing of the Nations*, *Revelat.* 22. 2.

The New Teſtament and Morality ſufficient to Salvation.

As for thoſe who ſay, that the New Teſtament is ſufficient for Chriſtians, I am apt to think, that the Goſpel with the Light of Nature, contain what is neceſſary to Chriſtians to Salvation; and therefore it ſeems not reaſonable to impoſe upon Chriſtians any of thoſe Laws contained in the Old Teſtament; which were only deſigned for the *Jews* and their Proſelytes; but tho' what is offered by the New Teſtament or the Light of Nature is ſufficient to Salvation; yet ſeveral Particulars in the Old Teſtament may aſſiſt us in the Diſtinct and Explicit Inſtruction of our Duty better than the New; and ſeveral things relating to the Myſteries of our Religion are more clearly expreſſed in the Old Teſtament: ſo that the Old Teſtament is neceſſary in reſpect of what we believe, and the New in reſpect of what we are to do. Beſides as the Expreſſions in the Old Teſtament are frequently referred to in the New; So the ſtudy of the former is requiſite to the better underſtanding of the later. Were it God's Will to inſtruct us as he did *Jonas*, by the ſhadow of a Weed, *Jonah* 4. 6. we ought to acquieſce, and

and much more when he ſpeaks in as Glorious a manner as he did to *Moſes*, in his holy Writings, reſembling the Sanctuary, which contained the Law of God, exhibiting the Mercy-Seat, where the two Golden Cherubims, like two Harmonious Teſtaments, look towards one another, and both towards the Mercy-Seat, which Typifyed the *Meſſias*. We ought therefore to thank God for the Light of his Spirit upon his Church, whoſe Bleſſings can proſper the Means of Grace, without which no means can proſper.

The Bible ought to be our dayly Study.

To what I have ſaid I ſhall add, that notwithſtanding the diſcouragements, the difficulties ſome obſcure Texts of Scripture may offer, we ought daily to read ſome Portion of Scripture, though, as *Naaman* dipped himſelf ſix times in *Jordan* without being cured, we ſhould not find an immediate benefit. For in Diſeaſes, though we cannot reliſh it, convenient nouriſhment muſt be taken. And as the Eunuch, *Acts* 8. 30, 31. we ought to read, though we underſtand not ſome Texts of Scripture, and fix them upon our Memories, till our Underſtanding can attain to the Knowledg of them. The Bleſſed Virgin and her Husband, *Underſtood not the ſayings that he ſpoke unto them —— but his Mother kept all theſe ſayings in her Heart*, Luke 2. 50, 51. ſee *v.* 18, 19. and our Saviour ſaid to *Peter*, *What I do thou knoweſt not now, but thou ſhall know hereafter*, *John* 13. 7. ſo as he encourages you to retain his Word in your Memory, he ſays, *what I ſay, thou knoweſt not now, but thou ſhalt know hereafter*. And the Apoſtles Motive to Hoſpitality will encourage us

in reading ſuch Parts of Scripture. *Be not forgetful to entertain Strangers, for thereby ſome have entertained Angels unawares*, *Heb.* 13. 2. as *Abraham* and *Lot* did, *Gen.* 18. and *Gen.* 19. which may recompence the trouble, by beſtowing Bleſſings, and reſcuing us from Evil. And if Pagans ſo much reverenced the Oracles, which proceeded from the Prince of Darkneſs and the Father of Lies, we ought not to deny thoſe λόγια ζῶντα *Lively Oracles*, λόγια τῦ Θεῦ, Oracles of God, who is *the Father of Lights*, and Truth *that cannot Lye*, *Act.* 7. 38. *Rom.* 3. 2. *Jam* 1. 17. *Tit.* 1. 2. And thoſe Texts which we do not underſtand, put us in mind of our weakneſs, and ſhew how much we Reverence the Word of God, as it is ſo. Nor ought the Contrivances of the Devil, who ſeeks to diſturb us in this ſtudy, deter us from it; for theſe are Struglings of Chriſt *new formed in us*, like thoſe fits and out-cries, which attended the Ejection of that unclean Spirit, *Mark* 1. 26. the Devil finding himſelf ready to be expelled, *hath great Wrath, becauſe he knoweth, he hath but a ſhort time*, *Rev.* 12. 12. *And though the God of Peace, he will bruiſe Satan under your Feet ſpeedily*, *Rom.* 16. 20. and if he ſhould ſuffer us to forſake the Study of Divinity for a time, let us not utterly deny ſo beneficial a ſtudy, but perſevere in the purſuit of the Means of Grace, as the Moon, which after an Eclipſe, purſues her Courſe, till ſhe regain the Luſtre ſhe was deprived of. The Word of God is a *Seed* by which we are *Born again*, *Mat.* 13. 19, 20. *&c.* 1 *Peter* 1. 2, 3. and though a Seed may ſeem dead and buried under Ground, yet it will ſoon ſpring up into a plentiful Harveſt.

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Nor ought our Proficiency in the Scriptures, make us neglect the Study of Divinity, no more than our Weakneſs. *I will never forget thy Precepts*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *for with them thou haſt quickned me*, *Pſal.* 119. 93. and the Word is compared to Food, which indeed it is of the Soul. *Man liveth not by Bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of God*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 2. *Mat.* 4. 4. Now as we ſhall have ſucceſſive Appetites to Eat, whilſt we live in theſe *Houſes of Clay*, *John* 4. 19. ſo the Soul ſtands in need of continual Supplyes; and as healthful Perſons have the beſt Stomachs, ſo the beſt Chriſtians have the the greateſt deſires after the Food of their Souls, τροφὴ ψυχῆς ἄγευστος, *Athanaſ.* and the greateſt Piety for want of it will pine and waſte. Nor ought we to think much of the pains we take in the Study of the Scriptures, ſince the recompence will reward us and the circumſtance inſtruct us. This plentifulneſs of the Scripture, occaſioned this Penegyrick of ſome *Rabbies* concerning the Law. *Turn it over, and again turn it over, for all is in it. Pirk. avoth. cap.* 5. accordingly the *Jew* who tranſlates the *Arabian Apothegms* into *Hebrew*, *There proceedeth not a true Sentence out of the Mouths of this Worlds Wiſe Men, that is not intimated in our Law.*

And to have the Scriptures in a Readineſs.

But we ought not only to remember ſeveral Texts of Scripture, but to have them in a Readineſs, and as *David* took the Sword of *Goliah*, from near the *Ephod* to defend himſelf from his Enemies; ſo Chriſtians ought to be armed with Spiritual Weapons, and to wear *the ſword of the Spirit* and to have it in readineſs on all

occaſions without the help of a Concordance. And to engage us further in this, we ought to conſider, that the Knowledg of one Part of Scripture, helps us to the acquiring of another, and yet the longeſt day of our Life will leave ſome Part of it ſtill Myſterious; and notwithſtanding the Importance, our depraved Nature makes it requiſite, that we ſhould frequently read the Scriptures to imprint them upon our Minds, though we may eaſily remember them. *The Word of Chriſt*, *Col.* 3. 16. muſt not be ſlightly entertained in our Minds, but muſt *dwell there richly*; and the word which is *able to ſave our Souls*, muſt be ingrafted, *James* 1. 21. And we are ſo indiſpoſed to admit, and apt to deface, Religious Impreſſions, that we ought to converſe conſtantly with what may tend to make us lead the whole Courſe of our Lives Piouſly. But our perverſe Natures are too apt to diſpoſe us to find fault with God's Methods of Proſecuting his Deſigns, and to blame his Conduct. That Glorioſeſt of Virgins, whom all Ages muſt call *Bleſſed*, *Luke* 1. 48. *John* 2. 3, 4. received a Reprehenſion from her Divine Son, only for offering to alter his Purpoſes in diſcloſing himſelf; for God is too Juſt to himſelf and Merciful to us, to degrade his Omniſcience, to have his Dictates altered by ſuch purblind Tutors as Us. His Goodneſs is too much concerned for our Inſtruction, to let us be the Inditers of his Words; and will make uſe of his own Meaſures to purſue his Ends; without being directed by us in his Election, which his Wiſdom hath Graciouſly been pleaſed to contrive for our Advantage.

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He knows that thoſe who find fault with his Style, would be pleaſed with none; but would be apt to ſay, why was this done ſo and not otherwiſe, and if that was altered, why not after another manner; as their Diverſity of Humours, Judgments and Prepoſſeſſions vary. And it is a queſtion, whether the *Iſraelites* murmured more at *Pharoah* in *Ægypt*, or *Moſes* in the deſart; and the Children, whom their Companions complained of in the Market place, have had the like Examples in all Ages, *Mat.* 11. 16, 17, 18, 19. of the ſame Diſpoſition with the *Jews*, who enjoyned upon the great Enemy of the lovely Quality, a rigidneſs of Vertue above that of the Prophets, and greater than *Solomon*'s Condeſcentions to thoſe Vices he deſigned them to deſtroy. But the great Phyſitian of our Souls, is too Wiſe to let his diſtracted Patients preſcribe rules for themſelves; or, to prevent our unreaſonable Cavils, to alter his Myſterious Contrivances, which raiſes the Admiration even of the Angels themſelves, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. which have both Native Abilities above ours, as well as the means of Improving them; for which Reaſon our Saviour refuſed to deſcend from the Croſs, to gratify thoſe Prieſts and Scribes, *Mat.* 27. 42. though on that condition they promiſed to believe on him. And though we may think, that ſuch a Method might engage us to our Duty, yet when one in Hell deſired other Meaſures might be taken to convert Sinners; he was anſwered, *That if Men heard not Moſes and the Prophets, neither would they be perſwaded though one roſe from the Dead to Preach to them*, Luke 16. 11.

Diſputes about Religion to be avoided by illiterate Perſons.

What we have ſaid we ſuppoſe to be ſpoke to Intelligent Perſons, but were we to ſpeak to common Readers, who could not hope, either for want of Parts or Leiſure, to vindicate either themſelves or others, I ſhould adviſe them not to liſten to, or undertake diſputes of any kind, about that Sacred Book, eſpecially when propoſed by inſinuating Wits; for it not being neceſſary for the Common People to be acquainted with Controverſial Parts of Scripture, nor to be acquainted with thoſe that wander from the common way to Heaven, it is not convenient for them to diſquiet their Faith or to hazard the ſubverting of it, to gratify unneceſſary Curioſity, which like the Itch grows worſe by it, though it gratifies the fancy to ſcratch it. And though a Man's deſign may be to gratify his Curioſity only, by hearing of Wit and Novelty; yet ſuch Notions are apt to raiſe ſtrange Scruples in ſuch Men's Thoughts, which are eaſily anſwered, but hard to be got out again: And as in Infectious Times, Phyſitians forbid ſmaller Exceſſes, or other Irregularities, which may breed diſtempered Humours, becauſe ſlight Fevers are apt to grow Peſtilential; ſo thoſe that value their Faith, ought to be cautious leſt the Cuſtom of railing againſt the Scripture, ſhould taint them, either by Reading or Converſation, leſt the ſmalleſt degrees of Contagion, ſhould end in Irreligion.

The laſt Objection Conſidered.

But to proceed to the laſt Objection we propoſe to anſwer, which is propoſed by thoſe who gratify their Phancy more than their Reaſon; ſome Object againſt the Style of the Scriptures, *That it is ſo unadorned with Flowers of Rhetorick,*

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and ſo deſtitute of Eloquence, that it is Flat, and hath no Effect upon Intelligent Readers; ſo that divers great Wits and Perſons, eſpecially States-Men, either deſpiſe it, or neglect to ſtudy it. A Cardinal once ſaid, he had read the Bible, but were he to read it again, he ſhould loſe his Latin; and a great many Orators have complained, that reading the Bible hath corrupted their *Ciceronian* Latin; which is ſtrange, that Men ſhould judge ſo boldly of that Book, they muſt be judged by; and I could name a great many Inſtances of Prophane and Undervaluing Expreſſions of that Book, were they not fitter to be ſuppreſſed than divulged, leſt they ſhould ſet bad Examples to others, whoſe Reaſon could not guard them from the Temptation of Imitation. For the Nature of ſome Sins deters Men from committing them; and ſome Legiſlators have thought it better to keep ſome Sins in ſilence, than to make Laws againſt them; therefore to avoid the naming of Particulars, we ſhall in general take Notice, that the Anſwers to ſuch kind of Objections may be reduced to theſe five following Heads of Arguments.

Arguments againſt the propoſed Objection of five kinds.

And *Firſt*, Several Parts of Scripture ſtand not in need of Rhetorick to adorn them; *Secondly*, The Bible ſeems to have leſs Eloquence as it appears in the Latin Verſion, or other Tranſlations, than it had in the Original. *Thirdly*, As different People and Nations have different Notions of Eloquence, many Paſſages are thought to want it, by Us, which may be thought Eloquent by another Part of Mankind. *Fourthly*, There are many Texts in Scripture, which have the Ornaments of Language conſonant to our Notions

Notions of Eloquence. *Laſtly*, It is contrary to Experience, that the Scripture hath no Effect upon the Generality of Readers, except they are unwilling to receive Impreſſions from it.

The firſt kind of Arguments.

As to the firſt kind of Arguments, from what we have ſaid it appears, that in ſome Parts of Scripture, Eloquence would be improper; but not to repeat what we have already ſaid, we ſhall only add, that all ſorts of People are allowed Expreſſions proper and ſuitable to their Profeſſions and Subjects; and though their Expreſſions ſeem to us harſh and unpoliſhed, yet we cannot blame them, as if rudeneſs of Style were their deſign; yet we blame the Style of the Scriptures, becauſe writ in a proper Theological Style. *Machiavel* in the Dedication of his Prince, after he owned to *Lorenzo de Medici*, that he had not made uſe of Lofty Words, nor adorned it with thoſe Ornaments of Art, which other Authors uſe, ſays, *that he thought fit that either nothing at all ſhould recommend his Work, or that the only Truth of the Diſcourſe, and the Dignity of the Subject ſhould make it acceptable.* And if a States-man writing to a Prince on a Civil Subject, thought fit to talk thus, how reaſonably may God expect a Welcom Entertainment and Acceptance, of the leaſt adorned Part of a Book, the Truth of which flows from the Author of Truth, eſpecially, ſince it concerns either Man's Happineſs or Miſery. And if neither the Italian Criticks, nor the Power of the Inquiſition can prohibit the ſtudy of this *Machiavels* Books, what Excuſe can they make one Day, who make the unaffected Style of the Scriptures an Excuſe for contemning or ſlighting that Book.

Secondly

Secondly, To what hath been before ſaid of the Diſadvantages of the Scriptures Style, we ſhall on this Occaſion add, that it is no wonder the Style of the Scripture is not more reverenced, whilſt it is judged of by Tranſlations, and not by the Original; the Tranſlation being in many places very harſh and barbarous, and being Tranſlated literally, not only loſes the Propriety of the Original, but alſo of the Latin; and thus loſes both a great deal of the Eloquence and Senſe of the Original, Excellent Expreſſions being frequently rendered improperly; which might be a great diſadvantage did the Subject want it; ſo that as *Mirandula* ſaid, *Hebræi bibunt Fontes, Græci Rivos, Latini Paludes.* The Riming Tranſlation of *Virgil*, repreſents the *Æneids* of *Virgil* little better than *Sternhold* and *Hopkin*'s Verſion of the *Pſalms*, who being both a Traveler, a Courtier, and a Poet, muſt be ſuppoſed to make uſe of the beſt Language belonging to that Country. That the Eaſtern Country had a great Opinion of the ſweet *Singer* of *Iſrael* is evident, ſince they reckon him with *Moſes*, *Jeſus*, and *Mahomet* one of the four great Prophets. And *Keſſæus*, who wrote the Lives of the Fathers ſays, *that when David ſang the Praiſes of God, the Hills, and Birds, and Beaſts therein accompanied him*, *Keſſæus p.* 99. ſee *Pſal.* 114. 4. *Pſal.* 19. which litteral Verſion of Figurative Expreſſions in the *Pſalms*, as well as his inviting inanimate Creatures to joyn in Praiſes with him, ſeems to be borrowed from the *Alcoran* it ſelf; where *Mahomet* repreſents God ſaying, *We reduced the Mountains to comply with him, who ſhould joyn with him in Praiſes Morning and*

A Second Anſwer to the eight Objection.

and Evening, the Birds alſo flock to him, all theſe are obſequious to him, Surrat. 37. *vide H. Hotting.* p. 62. and 63. And though the New Teſtament was not wrote in Hebrew, it was wrote by Hebrews in a Style agreeable to that of the Old Teſtament's Tranſlations. And the Apocryphal Writings, and other Writings of the Jews in that Language, wrote an Hebrew rather than an Attick Greek, or at leaſt in an Hebraick Style, which thoſe unacquainted with the Original Language muſt be incompetent Judges of, all Languages having their peculiar Idioms and Graces, which are loſt in moſt Tranſlations, like the Spirits of Eſſences by being poured out of one Veſſel into another; which Language was what God made Choice of to expreſs himſelf in, containing ſuch Expreſſing whoſe Penetracy can no more tranſlated into another Language, than the Water of a Diamond can be painted without detracting from the Original; beſides it's Words and Phraſes are ſo comprehenſive and copious, that no other Language can equal it. The Hebrew Conjugations *Hiphil* and *Hitpael* and ſome others, give ſignifications to Verbs, which for want of the like Conjugations, our Weſtern Languages are forced to expreſs by Circumlocutions, which are ſeldom as comprehenſive as the Original Words. And the want of Underſtanding Grammatical Truth, hath made ſeveral Paſſages of the New Teſtament leſs Underſtood, the Greek Tongue wanting thoſe Conjugations; ſo that Active and Intranſitive Verbs are uſed in a Tranſitive or Reciprocal Signification. And how unjuſtly Men's Ignorance of the Original may give occaſion for them

to

to cenſure the Scripture, I once obſerved in a famous Commentator, charging St. *Paul* with an Impropriety of Speech, in the beginning of of his firſt Epiſtle to the *Theſſalonians*, which by *Grotius de Antichriſto* is not improbably thought to be his ſecond; for ſince inſtead of the Greek ἀφ' ὑμῶν ἐξήχηται ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου which ours rightly tranſlated *from you ſounded out the Word*, *Theſſal.* 1. 8. he found it tranſlated, *A vobis diffamatus eſt Sermo*, where he would have it *divulgatus eſt*, inſtead of *diffamatus eſt*, not knowing that *Paul* wrote in Greek.

Thirdly, Several Paſſages in Scripture are judged to want Eloquence by our *Europeans*; the Eaſtern Eloquence much differing from ours. In thoſe Climates, where Learning was Original and Pure, the moſt admired Compoſures are cenſured by our Rules of Oratory, and judged deſtitute of it. Their dark Sentences, and figurative way of Diſcourſe, and their abrupt way of expreſſing themſelves often leaving us to gueſs at the Senſe; beſides their cuſtom of not connecting Tranſitions, which makes us at a loſs for want of the Coherency of what they write, is what we diſlike, and they practiſe; our Opinions as well as ways of writing being different; their Pens being an Omen of Changes in Religion, as moving from the right towards the left hand, and ours the contrary; ſo we think they write backwards, and we judge the ſame of them. A further Inſtance of our different Notions is the *Alcoran*. The *Mahometans* boaſt ſo much of the Wit and Eloquence of that Book, that the *Arabian* Expoſitors *Beidavi*, *Abmedbidu*, *Edris*, and others, tells us, that all *The Third Anſwer.*

all the Wit of Men and Demons cannot paralize it. *Mahomet* himſelf boaſts of it's Excellency, *S. Surat.* 10. *S.* 11. and *S.* 17. each Surat or Section being in his Opinion above Oppoſition, which he thinks muſt argue more than Human Authority. And the *Saracens* having no Miracles to favour their Religion; ſay, the *Alcoran* it ſelf is a Miracle above all Miracles, *& nihil præter ſolum Alcoranum (adduxiſſet,) ſatis hoc foret ad eximiam Excellentiam ſupra reliqua, quæ Prophetæ adduxerunt: nam ille Miraculum eſt, quod in ſecula durat præ omnibus aliis miraculis. H. Hotting. Hiſt. Orient. pag. circiter* 300. I am not skilled enough in the *Arabick* Tongue to judge of it's Eloquence in that Language; but tho' the *Alcoran* hath taken much from the Bible, and conſequently muſt contain things that are Excellent, yet the Latin Verſion, by orders of the Abbot *Petrus Cluniacenſis*, & publiſhed by the means of *Bibliander* is far from any compariſon with the *European* Eloquence; of which *Scaliger* ſays, *Deum Immortalem, quam inepta eſt Vulgaris illa, quam habemus Interpretatio!* And the French and Latin Tranſlations, by good *Arabicians*, being rendered Conformable to the Original, ſeem void of the leaſt Eloquence, the Style being without Graces, and even Theological Truths; and the *Saracens* Admiration is as much to be admired at, as he admired that Book. And not only the Eminent Eaſt *Indians*, but the Learned *Chineſe*, though they wrote with what Care they could, and have been tranſlated with as much, by knowing Interpreters, yet to us they appear rather Ridiculous than Eloquent. But to mention no others, ſince

Mahomet's

Mahomet's Eloquence was ſufficient to gain Proſylites to ſuch a Religion as his; ſince *Moſes* bred up to all the refined Learning and Wiſdom of the *Ægyptians*; ſince *Solomon* had not only extraordinary Advantages of improving himſelf, but ſo much Wiſdom that he hath been admired for ſo many Ages by Us, and was Idolized by the Eaſtern World; and ſince *Daniels* promiſing Youth was improved by the Learning of the *Chaldean Sages*, and the Spirit of God, and whoſe Abilities raiſed him from a Captive, to be chief of the *Chaldean* Wiſe-Men; I ſay, ſince thoſe Writers ſo much admired by the Eaſtern Nations, are by many cenſured as bad Writers; and ſince *Cicero* hath been cenſured and condemned for want of Eloquence, we have a great deal of Reaſon to think, that the Grecian and Roman Style may be as little eſteemed amongſt the Eaſtern People, as theirs is amongſt us; and conſequently, that the Eloquence of the Scriptures is but a different kind from Ours; eſpecially if we conſider, that the Antient Writers now extant, were ſcarce Cotemporary with the lateſt Writers of the Old Teſtament, and yet the Eloquence and Expreſſions of our Thoughts differ in all Ages and Nations; for as in Dreſs, Mode makes things handſom or ugly, and as they vary, that which made a Man look like a Courtier, may ſoon make him look like an Antick; and by Viciſſitudes of Faſhions, ſometimes old ones become new, ſo Modes in Writing alſo vary, which appears from the 114. Epiſtle of *Seneca*, where he ſhews, that in ſome Ages, Expreſſions that were looked upon as faulty, by the conſent of the Wits of other times, have

have paſſed for Eloquence. And though the Scripture now may not be eſteemed Eloquent, yet it might ſuit the Genius of thoſe times when it was wrote, and whom it was deſigned to work upon.

Of the Art of Rhetorick.

But to conſider the Nature of the Art of Rhetorick, it is but an Organical or Inſtrumental Art; and to make it perſwaſive or delightful, it's Rules ought to be Judged of by their Tendency, and their aptneſs to the End deſigned; and conſequently, a wiſe Man will conform with them, as far as they are proper to perſwade or pleaſe; which ends, if he can obtain better, by declining them, than practicing them, the propereſt means to the deſigned Ends are to be prefered, and the Scope of the Artiſt is to be eſteemed before the Scope of the Art, and we are rather to ſpeak Powerfully than Regularly. And it may hence appear inconſiderate to Judg of Eloquence by the Rules, that the Admirers of *Cicero* have laid down; and to mix their Syſtem of Precepts with the true Art of Rhetorick, as if they were of equal Value and Extent. For *Cicero* being eſteemed Eloquent, and ſucceſsful in perſwading People differently qualifyed, thoſe who declined, more than Imitation, either through Modeſty or Deſpair, obſerving, that on ſuch occaſions, he made uſe of particular Contrivances, and Figurative Forms of Speech; thoſe obſervations being reduced to Rules, which were approved by their Succeſſors, and Additions made from the Obſervations of the Practiſe of other Orators, they were at laſt drawn up into an Art. Which though it may aſſiſt us to Imitate *Cicero*, *Demoſthenes*,

thenes, or others, from whom thoſe Inſtitutions have been drawn; yet it is far from being a Compleat Syſtem of Rhetorick, ſince one may as well be drawn from the Journals of *Solomon's Tarſhiſh* Fleets, and the *Grecian* and *Roman* Sea-Voyages, of the Art of Navigation; for if other Perſons by the Improvement of Nature, can find more Powerful ways of expreſſing themſelves, they ought not to be confined by former Preſcriptions, no more than *Columbus* was by the Rules of Antient Navigators, which had he acquieſced in, without proceeding further, a large Part of the World had been yet undiſcovered. And here I ſhall obſerve, that though the Chineſe are eſteemed the moſt Numerous, Flouriſhing and Civilized People in the World, and the greateſt Part of Preferments are obtained by Verbal Learning; and though Books in their Language contain almoſt all kind of Liberal Arts and Sciences, yet from a late *Italian* Hiſtory of that Country and others, it appears, that tho' thisCountry which hath ſo long flouriſhed,& allows Encouragement and Recompence to learned Men,yet they have not received Rhetorick into the Number of their Arts and Sciences, leſt, as we ſuppoſe, confining Men's Expreſſions to eſtabliſhed Rules,ſhould tye them up from expreſſing themſelves ſo eloquently, as their Nature might incline them to do; or as they might, when left to their Liberty. Not but that the *Ciceronian* Rules may aſſiſt weak Fancies, though they check thoſe that are active. But we may obſerve, that the *Vropian* Rules of Oratory,are ſeldom offered by thoſe,who write other Books that may be tryed by them; and

Wiſe Men both in the Eaſt and Weſt, will not eaſily loſe their Thoughts, becauſe they comply not with thoſe Rules, though too many are ſo blindly Servile, as to imitate both the Bad as well as the Good in Authors that are applauded; and make their Errors Rules of Art, and Man's Fancy, Laws to others; and transfer them as ſuch to their Succeſſors, charging thoſe that ſubmit not, with want of Thought or Preſumption. Thus *Seneca* tells us of the Imperfections of Style of one Eminently in Vogue for Eloquence, which were taught to others upon his Authority.—*hæc vitia unus aliquis inducit, ſub quo tunc Eloquentia eſt; cæteri imitantur & alter alteri tradunt, ſic Salluſtio vigente, amputatæ Sententiæ, & verba ante expectatum cadentia, & obſcura brevitas, fuere pro cultu Seneca, Epiſt.* 114. As, ſays he, in *Salluſt's* time, a maimed Style, abrupt Sentences, Words miſplaced to admiration, and obſcure Brevity paſſed for Ornaments; and it may eaſily be obſerved that the Weeds of Rhetoricians are cryed up for Flowers. To Conclude, it is no wonder *Cicero's* Writings ſhould be according to the Rules of Rhetorick, ſince the Rules of Retorick are formed out of his Works.

A Fourth anſwer to the Objection.

But *Fourthly*, there are few Books which are not more Voluminous, ſo full of figurative Expreſſions as the Bible, moſt of the Tropes or Figures in Rhetorick, being contained in the Expreſſions of the Holy Writ; but to enumerate theſe, would make this Eſſay too Voluminous, beſides I hear it is undertaken already by abler Pens. Therefore I ſhall only ſay, that the Eloquence of Scripture hath been celebrated by

Perſons

Perſons famous for Eloquence. And ſeveral who had as good Pretences to Eloquence and Oratory, as thoſe that cenſure the Scriptures, have ſuſpected their own, ſeeing the Eloquence of the Prophet *Eſay*; and ſome, (one of which is the Prince of *Mirandula*, whom the greateſt *Rabbi* of the Age Styles the *Phœnix* of his Age) have prefered Divine Writings, before all the Volums they had peruſed. And what we ſay of Books, may be applyed to what an Excellent Poet, ſays of Miſtreſſes:

'Tis not that which firſt we Love,
But what dying we Approve;

Mr. *Waller*,

Which we expreſs the greateſt value for. And the beſt Orators dividing the Art into two Parts; the one conſiſting in the Ornaments of our Conceptions; and the other, in their agreeableneſs to our Deſign and Method, and their Application to the Circumſtances of the Matter, Speaker and Hearer, the later is incomparably practiſed in Scripture; and as much of the former is made uſe of, as may ſerve the Authors purpoſes; who never wants delicacy or ſmoothneſs, but when it would be incongruous to his Deſign. And where theſe Verbal Embelliſhments are not made uſe of, they may well be ſpared, ſome Subjects look better and recommending themſelves more, in ordinary Language, than others in the fineſt Expreſſions. Yet florid Eloquence in many Texts is hid by the Matter, and appears not great, becauſe not the greateſt Famous Writers have prefered the

Prophet *Eſay*, before *Demoſthenes* or *Cicero*, not only commending him for his lofty ſtrain, but an Harmonious Diſpoſition and Sound of Words. So that the Scripture hath Celebrators, and Admirers, as well as Degraders.

Degraders of the Scripture ought to be undervalued.

And that the Authority of thoſe that degrade the Scriptures ought to be leſſened, will appear for ſeveral Reaſons. For *Firſt*, few of them read it in the Original, and few or none of them knew what might be ſaid in Defence of the Style of the Scripture; ſo that a great many Men of Parts find fault with it, not becauſe they are Wits, but becauſe they underſtand not what might be ſaid in the Defence of it. But though they might not want Information; yet they ſeem not free from Vanity and Envy, great Wits ſtill coveting to be thought more and more ſo; having no eſteem for any thing, themſelves did not do, or had not a hand in, as if all praiſes given to others, detracted from them. So that it is no wonder ſome ſhould undervalue that, who are ſo ambitious to be thought *Wits*, that they deſignedly ſlight what others Admire and Reverence. And further, it is well known, that Envy and Malice and Ambition are not the only faults of thoſe who diſparage the Scriptures, ſome of them living ſo looſely, that they degrade the Scriptures, leſt they ſhould be obliged to live according to it. So they ſeem to make it their Intereſt to find fault with that which would blame them; according to what our Saviour ſays, *That many love Darkneſs rather than Light, becauſe their Deeds are Evil, and that he that does evil*

evil hateth the Light, neither cometh to the Light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved, 1 *John* 3. 19 20. And as Conſcious Malefactors find fault with the Statute Books; they cenſure the Scriptures to palliate their Sins, or in Revenge; becauſe the Sacred Writings, expoſe their Deformities to the Eyes of the World, and their own Conſciences; and their irreligious Expreſſions rather ſhew, what they would have Men believe of them, than their Opinions of the Scripture; thus hoping that their faults will rather be imputed to their Superiority of Reaſon, than the Superiority of their Paſſions above their Reaſon.

A digreſſion againſt Prophaneneſs, as it relates to the Scripture.

A Digreſſion againſt Prophaneneſs.

We deſigned to proceed to the fifth and laſt Argument, but to uſe *Davids* Words, *whilſt I was muſing the Fire burned, Pſal.* 39. 3. and my Zeal for the Scriptures, as well as againſt it's Oppoſers, being concerned, a Book of ſo much value, ſhould ſuffer amongſt leſs diſcerning Men, for the Diſparagement of Wits. Therefore to what we have ſaid in Defence of the Scripture, we ſhall add, that a great many are looked upon as Wits, who diſparage the Scriptures which really are not ſo; nor would they be thought ſo, did they not employ what they have with a great deal of Impudence, in perverting inſpired Expreſſions to an ill purpoſe, as if they contained obſcene thoughts. But this will but little recommend prophane Perſons to thoſe that are ſerious, and Men of Knowledg; the

beſt Books being liable to be Burleſqued, to make Sport for the Readers. On the other hand, it is no hard matter to miſ-repreſent, diſ-membred Words and Paſſages of any Book, ſo that any Man may be ſuch a kind of Wit, that will allow himſelf the Saucineſs. And though ſuch Perſons may be obliged to take ſuch Meaſures to be thought Wits, Intelligent Perſons will ſcarce think them ſo, that muſt forfeit their Conſcience to pleaſe their Fancies; and cannot entertain their Friends, without furniſhing their Table, without Meat unfit to eat; nor can he be wiſe, that will venture to be damned to be thought ſo, And what aggravates their Prophaneneſs is, that few of thoſe *Fools* who *make a mock of Sin, Pſal.* 14. 1. *have ſaid in their Hearts that there is no God,* or that the Bible is not his Word, their vanity, not incredulity occaſioning their Prophaneneſs. Their Affecting Singularity, and Deſires to be conſpicuous, without Abilities, like *Eroſtratus* that fired *Diana*'s Temple to be talked of, they commit Sacriledge to obtain what their Parts could not acquire; and thoſe have but little Wit, who cry up ſuch for Wits. And as Withees if found, grow up to Trees though unregarded, but when rotten ſhine in the dark; ſo dull Perſons corrupted are regarded, but it is only for their Depravity; and as rotten Wood only ſhines in the Night, ſo theſe paſs for Wits, only amongſt ſuch as are not ſo themſelves. For Men of Wit only eſteem that ſuch, which appears ſo to their Judgment, not to their Corruptions; and a great many will talk tolerably in Derogation of the Scriptures,

who upon other Occaſions are very dull, and ſay nothing well, but what is ill, if ſaid; and moſt of theſe kinds of Wits, are guilty of Preſumption as well as Prophaneneſs, ſome of them pretending to talk Rhetorick more Magiſteriouſly than *Ariſtotle* or *Tully*, and magnify their own Writings above the Bible or the moſt eſteemed Authors of Antiquity: and as *Aſaph* ſaid, *Pſalm* 83. 8, 9. *They ſpeak loftily, they ſet their Mouth againſt the Heavens, and their Tongue walketh through the Earth.* They ſpeak arrogantly and cenſure both God and Man, though they know no other Tongue but their Mothers; and in Rhetorick know not the difference betwixt a Trope and a Figure; and no wonder ſuch Tranſcendently conceited Wits undervalue the Scripture, when they prefer ſome drunken Song, or trivial Epigram, a Love-Letter, or ſome flaſhy Trifle, which diſcovers a mean Soul more than an elevated Fancy. Their Songs too, only ſerve like Anchovies to invite Men to drink, or in an Amour, proſtitute their Wit to celebrate the defeat of their Reaſon; and are proud to be flattered with the vain thoughts of Wit, magnifying thoſe that magnify them, and think it as great a proof of Eloquence to perſwade a Miſtreſs ſhe is handſom and adored, whom it would be Eloquence to perſwade to the contrary. The Jews often mention the Names of Deceaſed Sinners, with this ſaying, *May the Name of the wicked rot*; but as a Swine when dead, is often ſalted, and the Gammon ſtuck with Bays, ſo ſeveral Epicures, after Death, have their Names preſerved with flattering Epitaphs, and

Funeral Sermons; whilſt their drunken Rhimes are extolled by their ſurviving Companions, and Bays miſapplyed to ſuch Purpoſes as they were never intended for; where *Horace* is no more conformed to, than the Example of *David*, and the Laws of Art as well as Religion are violated. In ſuch Compoſures often the Themes are made for the Conceits, not the Conceits for the Themes, and ſublime Nonſenſe paſſes for exalted Senſe and Wit; and though true Wit, is more eaſie to underſtand, than it is to forbear admiring it, yet frequently confuſed Notions, and abortive Conceptions, or ambiguous Expreſſions, are expoſed to the candid Cenſure of the Reader, which the Writer hath the Vanity to expect favourable, Men once thinking that lofty Wits were like Parrots, or Men aſleep, who may be underſtood by others, though they underſtand not what they ſay themſelves. Nor is their Proſe much better than their Verſes; for though thoſe that have Wit, may expreſs it in a Letter to a great Man or a Miſtreſs; yet moſt of what they ſay, ſeems but Prologues or Paraphraſes on the Subſcription, Your Humble Servant; and though Love is generally thought to raiſe the Fancy, Lovers like blinded Pidgeons flying the higher, and as ſome obſerve, elevates the Fancies of leſſer Wits, and infatuates great ones; yet a witty Lady uſed to ſay, that by taking away half a ſcore Words, ſhe would undertake to ſpoyl all the Letters of theſe amorous Gallants. But though this Challenge reliſhes of Vanity as well as Skill, yet to expreſs the ſenſe of theſe few Words, (I deſire you ſhould think I can write well, am a Civil

Civil Perſon, and your Humble Servant,) being the ſubſtance of moſt of their Ceremonial Papers, their Amplifications, with all the Multiplicity of empty Words, do but like Market People, pay a piece in twenty Shillings. Wits who want both ſolid Reaſon and Learning, Fancy being predominant, approve thoſe things moſt, which are the products of Fancy. And though I will not ſay it requires Parts to write acceptable and mighty Complements, but to make them grateful by making them great ones, (flattery and profaneneſs like ſpots in a Leopard, being all that makes them beautiful) or to flatter thoſe that are ready to accept of it, though the Perſon that does it, thinks it not deſerved; yet a Writer hath a great Latitude and Liberty, when he needs not believe what he ſays, but may ſay what he thinks moſt convenient, or what ought to be believed. And indeed, thoſe that make uſe of their Pens, either to write new and pleaſing Fancies in ſoft Language, or on ſuch Subjects as require Learning and Knowledg in a good dreſs, may find it eaſier to give delight, where that is the ſole end, and ſtick at nothing to attain it, where to pleaſe is only a ſubordinate End, where Men allow themſelves not all the Meaſures to attain it. And I doubt not but ſuch Perſons find it eaſier to write acceptable on ſuch Subjects, where they are not obliged to write either Reaſon or Senſe, than to write on another where it is requiſite to write nothing but what is uſeful and true, conſidering that Men will queſtion what they write, if God does not queſtion them for what Time they ſpend, and what their Readers miſ-

employ.

employ. And indeed if we compare thoſe applauded Trifles wrote by them that undervalue the Style of the Scriptures, with the Learned Writings of St. *Auſtin*, St. *Hierom*, *Tertullian*, *Lactantius*, *Chryſoſtom*, *Mirandula*, and others, whoſe penetrating Arguments overthrow not the Enemies of God, with the Jaw Bone of an Aſs as *Sampſon* did, *Judg.* 15. 15. nor as *Shamgar* with an Ox Goad, *Judg.* 3. 31. but as *Elias* with the Fire from Heaven, 2 *Kings* 1. 10. whoſe Apologetical Defences of the Spiritual *Jeruſalem* are as ſolid, as the Wall of the Heavenly *Jeruſalem* is ſaid to be of *Jaſper*, and it's Foundations adorned with pretious Stones, *Rev.* 21. *v.* 10, 18, 19. When then theſe frothy Compoſures are compared with Sacred Writings, there is as much, and much more difference than betwixt the Statues in the capital, and the ſmall Babies in the Exchanges; the value of the Matter and the Workmanſhip of the former, not only making them deſerve Eſteem, but being valued by the beſt Artiſts, and which time cannot conſume, but rather adds a value for; whereas the later are Trifles, only valued by Children, for their gaudy dreſs, which will ſoon be ſoiled or worn out, or the faſhion being loſt, will become ridiculous. But if the Criminal Aſpirer ſhould, at the laſt, obtain his deſired Fame, yet he will have no Reaſon to be fond of it, if he conſiders, that the Devil, who deceives other Men with things of Value, hath deceived him with a Trifle, which hath only a tranſient ſound; for Fame is only a bleſſing depending on the Qualities of the Perſons that gave it; otherwiſe the Devil would be as happy, as he is miſera-

ble;

ble; and fame which is undeſerved, is a Quality which Infamy or Folly may procure. *Momus* is as much talked of as *Homer*, and *Pilate* as much as *Ariſtotle*; and *Barabbas* is recorded in Scripture, though the Name of the Penitent Thief is not mentioned; and the higheſt applauſe will hardly recompence the puniſhment of Prophaneſs, nor will his Name avail in other Books, if blotted out of the Book of Life. And thoſe who covet a future Name by irreligious Writings, not to have a Name till the Region of Darkneſs precedes that future Light, that Ambition muſt be ſtrange, which beyond the Grave comes ſhort of Heaven; and thoſe Wits muſt be great Fools, who for Praiſes they ſhall never hear, ſecure themſelves Torments they muſt never part with. For though Prophaneſs may be thought but a ſmall Sin, becauſe but a Verbal one, I wiſh it were well conſidered, how great a fault it will be, to affront God's Word, at that great day, when *the Lord ſhall come with ten Thouſands of his Saints, to execute Judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly amongſt them, of all their ungodly Deeds which they have ungodlily committed, alſo of all their hard Speeches, which ungodly Sinners have ſpoken againſt him*, Jude v. 14, 15. And though theſe ſmall ſins, in Health and Proſperity ſeem not much to blemiſh our Conſciences, yet in Diſtreſs or near Death, when God comes to *ſearch Men's Hearts as if it were with Candles, and puniſh the Men that are ſettled upon their Lees*, Terror then will ſeize them. For as Juice of Lemons alters not the colour of Paper, whilſt kept from the Fire when it is wrote upon, but by the Heat

of

of that, the black Lines appear; ſo Adverſity draws out the blackneſs which appeared not in Proſperity, nor could be diſcerned before. And if the cryes of ſome ſins can reach Heaven, *Gen.* 18. 21. Prophaneneſs will not be altogether unheard, ſince theſe *Scoffers*, 2 *Pet.* 3. 3. and *Jude v.* 17, 18. *rebel againſt the Light, and kick againſt the Pricks* of their own Conſciences; which Crimes will juſtly call for Vengeance to fall down upon their Heads. The Feet of our Saviour in the *Apocalypſe* are ſaid to be like fine Braſs, which intimates that though he be ſlow in coming to puniſh ſinners, yet when he does he will cruſh them under his Feet and conſume them. And if immediate Centempt can highly exaſperate, how great muſt that be which deſpiſes God, and that Word, by which he hath declared his Mind to Mankind. *Plutarch* to ſhew how much more ſome Idolaters incenſed the Deity than Atheiſts, ſays, he ſhould take it leſs amiſs, that a Man ſhould deny there was ſuch a Man as *Plutarch*, than to be told he was an old Fellow, that like *Saturn*, uſed to devour his Children, and guilty of other Crimes, the Heathens imputed to that God. And thus God may be leſs provoked by thoſe who doubt or deny the Authority of the Scripture, than thoſe that prophanely make bold with it, ſince the later charge God with Inditing what is only fit to make Men ſport with. Beſides Prophaneneſs is ſuch an unprofitable Sin, that it only gets an ill Name amongſt Men upon Earth, and a worſe place amongſt them in Hell, and is ſuch a malicious Enemy to Piety; that he will do Religion harm, though it does himſelf no good.

There

There can be no excuſe made that he injures his Conſcience, to gratify his Senſes; and tho' he makes ſuch an ill Bargain, that he get Hell in with it; yet the Wiſdom of ſuch, comes far ſhort of their Folly, who loſe their Souls to gain the Whole World. And a Sin that is ſo injurious to the Glory of God, and tends to ſubvert the Immortal Souls of Men, and to *deſtroy them for whom Chriſt dyed*, *Rom.* 14. 15. by being Verbal, will not be the leſs heinous; therefore to thoſe that commit it, I ſhall recommend the laſt half of the Epiſtle of *St Jude*, which ought to make thoſe that conſider the Fate threatned to their Predeceſſors, that were guilty of it, to tremble at their Crime, who upon Preſumption of their great Wit, like *Jeroboam* who forſook the Temple, where God ſo Glorioufly manifeſted himſelf to Mankind, to worſhip Calves of his own making, 1 *Kings* 12. 28, 32. Diſparage the Scriptures. And I ſhould not engage my ſelf in this Diſpute, were it not for the *Wiſe Man*'s Counſel to *anſwer a Fool according to his Folly, leſt he be Wiſe in his own Conceit*, *Prov.* 26. 5. for what I have ſaid, was deſigned for none but ſuch Wits as traduce or undervalue the Scriptures.

An Appendix to this Digreſſion inviting one Sort of Witty Men to make amends for the Prophaneneſs of the other.

How happy would it be for ſome Witty Men to employ themſelves as *Bezaleel* and *Aboliah* did in Working in the Sanctuary, (rather than in Prophaneneſs,) and improving Divinity. Though the Structure rejects not Goats Hair, and Coloured Badgers Skins, yet it will admit purple and fine Linnen, yes Gold and Silver and

and pretious Stones, *Exodus* 27. 3, 4, 5. *&c.* the richeſt Ornaments of Learning and Eloquence being merited by the Study of Theology, and applicable to that Heavenly Subject, as well for our own ſakes as that of the Subject. Moſt Men are deſirous to enjoy as well as leave a good Name behind them; to which purpoſe they take a great deal of pains to hide and diſguiſe their ſins, and to convey a good Name to Poſterity, by flattering Epitaphs. Now Pious Perſons who can write well, may eaſily gain the Reputation of being vertuous as well as knowing, and will hereafter receive a double reward; for they that are *Wiſe, ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the Firmament; and they that turn many to Righteouſneſs, as the Stars forever and ever*, *Daniel* 12. 3. It is a great complaint amongſt Zealous Perſons, that more Wits and Grandees, pervert God's Gifts to the Service of Idols of their own ſetting up, like the Degenerate *Jewiſh* Church, of whom God complains, that *ſhe did not know, that he gave her the Corn and Wine and Oyl, and multiplyed her Silver and her Gold, which they prepared for Bael*, *Hoſ.* 2. 8. than imitate *David* and his Princeſs, who conſecrated their Gold, Silver, and pretious Stones, towards enriching the Temple, 1 *Chron.* 29. and perfumed their offering with this acknowledgment, *All things come of thee and thine own have we given thee*, ver. 14. But though a great many Perſons of Note and great Wits think not of that ſaying, *what haſt thou that thou didſt not receive*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 7. but like the Clouds obſcure thoſe Rays that elevated them, yet I doubt not but that as ſeveral Royal

Pens

Pens have been employed in examining the Scripture; and as God made Choice of the Wiſeſt and moſt Learned Perſons in *Ægypt*, to write down what he dictated; ſo he will one day excite both the Grandees and the Wits, by their Devotion and Service, to improve the Scriptures, and make amends for the Injuries Irreligious Parts and Greatneſs have done it. And the early Study of Divinity would indeed eaſily engage the greateſt Wits in it's Cauſe; and it were to be wiſhed that Witty Writers were more employed in behalf of Religion, that their Services might endear it to them; for Men are as apt to engage themſelves by the kindneſſes they do, as by thoſe they receive. And to encourage Men of Parts to employ their Pens on ſo good a Subject as the Scriptures, I ſhall repreſent, that that Immortality of Name, which thoſe acquire that write upon other Subjects may be obtained by Divine ones, and the leſs for being laſt ſought; nor can the Subject diminiſh their Fame, except in compariſon to a greater good, Men looking upon their own Glory, as an Acceſſion to God's: nor does it hinder others from Praiſing the Wit and Eloquence they employ in the Praiſing of God: as Beauty was admirable in Veſtals, and an Excellent Voice may raviſh us with a Pſalm; or as Jewels which adorned it, ſhone in *Aarons* Breaſt-plate; for, *as Godlineſs is profitable unto all things, having the promiſe of the Life that now is, and of what is to come*, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. and as *the Hundred Fold now in this time*, is not inconſiſtent with *the Eternal Life in the World to come*, *Mark* 10. 30. ſo a pious Writer, may at once enrowl

rowl his Name both in the Books of Life & Fame, & like holy *David*, wear a Crown of Lawrel both here & hereafter; τὸν ἀμαράντινον τῆς δόξης στέφανον, that unfading Crown of Glory, 1 *Pet.* 5. 4. And though we are so sinful, that we cannot relish any thing that would reclaim us; yet less licentious times will make amends for the Omissions of the present, with Gratitude to them that conveigh those Truths to others, in the best dress they will admit. And though *Solomon* communicated so many Songs and Proverbs, as well as the Natures of Animals of several kinds, and the History of Plants, from the *Cedar* of *Libanus*, even to the *Hyssop* that springeth out of the Wall; 1 *Kings* 31. 32, 33. yet those Treatises designed for the Instruction of the Church remain, though the other are lost. And as the *Manna* the *Israelites* gathered for Domestick Uses, remained not good above a Day or two, yet that which was laid up in the Sanctuary to perpetuate it, lasted whole Ages uncorrupted; so those Books which only serve our private Interest or Fame, seldom live long, *Exod.* 16. *v.* 20, 35, 54. whereas those built for the Honour of God, are more lasting and durable. And those uneloquent Expositions of the Antient Jews that have continued for so many Ages only for the sake of the Subject; give us Reason to know, that the Scripture makes the Names of those that illustrate it as immortal as it self. And such an Employment, according to the Psalmist, *I have more Understanding than all my Teachers, because thy Testimony is my Meditation*, *Psal.* 119 99. invites God to increase our Parts; as he that had most Talents committed

ted to him, as a Reward for his Service in Improving them, was intruſted with more, *Mat.* 25. 28. And he who entertained our Saviour with a few Cups of Wine, had Veſſels of Water turned into Wine, *John* 2. 10. And certainly great Wits, when they incline themſelves to write Divinity, improve thoſe Subjects which are ſo capable of Improvement, and a little Time Signalizes their Pens, being already furniſhed with the requiſites of good Writers; ſo that they need but apply their Knowledg and Eloquence to make them handle Divine Subjects elaborately. Thus *Hiram* uſed the skill he had learned in *Tyre* ſucceſsfully, in building and adorning the Temple of God, 1 *Kings* 7. 13, 14. *&c.* And *Jepthah* ſhewed his Courage and Art, which raiſed his Name in the Land of *Tob*, in defending the Cauſe, and Victoriouſly defeating the Enemies of God, *Judg.* 11. And the Primitive Times furniſh us with ſeveral Inſtances of this, as the Productions of that Stupendious Wit, *St. Auſtin* in an unregenerate State, when he was converted to the Catholick Faith and Piety, which makes me compare him to *Aarons* Rod, which was admired for the Wonders it wrought abroad; but when once it was laid up in the Tabernacle, and was not confined to the uſual Laws of other Plants, it brought forth Fruit in one Night, *Numb.* 17. 4, 8.

The Fourth Objection proſecuted.

But to return from this long Digreſſion, it was objected, that ſeveral great Princes and States-Men, as well as great Wits, diſeſteem or neglect the Scriptures. And indeed notwithſtanding the Prerogatives of the Bible, too

many great Men deny themſelves the Bleſſing of Reading the Bible, though they deny not God to be the Author, the chief Excuſe being Lazineſs or Pride. Thoſe who pretend want of Leiſure to read the Scripture, they muſt give a very good Account of their time, that can think, the time ſpent in purchaſing a happy Eternity miſimployed, which it is ſcarce Modeſty to expect, whilſt they deny to allow him a part of that, which they are but Tenants at Will of, and receive all from him. But that this Excuſe will avail little, ſince when God made a King to Govern his People, concerning the Book of the Law he ſaid, *It ſhall be with him, and he ſhall read them therein all the days of his Life*, *Deut.* 17. 18, 19. by which means it ſhall be prolonged, *ver.* 20. And as a barren Woman was bleſſed with many more for lending one Child willingly to the Lord, 1 *Sam.* 2. 20, 21. ſo the time ſpent in God's ſervice improves and rather prolongs it. But further, the King, *ver.* 18. was not only obliged to read, but to write the Law; and the Learned *Rabbies* tell us, that the King was obliged to write it out himſelf as he was King. *Rambam* or *Rabbi Moſes, Ben. Maimon*: For though he had a Copy of the Law of his own Writing, before he was King, yet afterwards he was obliged to write it with that hand that held the Scepter. And to *Joſhuah*, who was both a General and a Judge, to govern One People, and Conquer Seven, God ſaid, *This Book of the Law ſhall not depart out of thy Mouth, but thou ſhalt meditate therein Day and Night, that thou mayeſt obſerve to do, according to all that is written therein*;

in; for then thou ſhalt make thy way proſperous, and then thou ſhalt have good Succeſs. And further, as *David*, was a Shepherd, a Conqueror and a King, had no doubt Avocations enough, before he came to the Crown, being a deſpiſed Younger Brother, an Envied Courtier, a Diffident Fugitive and a Diſtruſted Captain, and after, as he enjoyed it, loſt it and regained it; yet he found time enough for the Study of Divinity, without neglecting his ſecular Affairs, and notwithſtanding his Greatneſs and Fame and Multiplicity of Buſineſs, he took ſo much Pains, that he made Divinity Univerſally his Study, his Practice anſwering the Apoſtles Precept, *Diligence in Buſineſs and fervent in Spirit, Rom.* 12. and he may be fitly compared to the Winged *Cherubims* in the Old Tabernacle, whom neither the Richneſs of the Jewels about them, nor the Fumes of Incenſe could divert from their fixed Poſture, looking towards the Ark of the Teſtimony which contained the Law, and the Mercy-Seat which repreſented Chriſt, *Deut.* 25. 18, 19, 20, 21. And indeed none ought to know better things than Princes, whoſe eminent Conditions make their Vertues or Vices participate, being either very good or bad Examples. The *Jews* we find ſerved *God* or *Baal* as their King did, and Prophane Hiſtory tells us, that *Rome* was Warlike under *Romulus*, Superſtitious under *Numa*, Subjects being always moulded by their Princes, where Imitation makes Part of their Duty of Obedience. A ſtate not unlike *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Myſterious Image; whoſe Head was of Gold, and all the other Parts and inferior Members of a Proportionate

tionate value to their Vicinity to it. When once Princes addict themſelves to the Study of Divinity, and the other accompliſhments which promiſed God's People *That Kings ſhould be it's Nurſing Fathers, and their Queens it's Nurſing Mothers, Eſay* 49. 23. the Golden Age will be in reality, and not only in Poets Dreams; for Sovereignty is little leſs applicable to good than to ill; *Trajan* and *Conſtantine*, being as publick Bleſſings as *Nero* and *Caligula* were Miſchiefs, Vertue on a Throne having as publick an Influence as Vice; and if Sovereigns would as much ſtrive for Superiority in Vertue over their Subjects, as they poſſeſs by their Fortune, and Kings only make uſe of their Sword to keep others from abuſing it, and chuſe rather to be like God in the Employment than the Unlimitedneſs of their Power, their Subjects might expect to be happy. But to leave Princes to better Monitors, we ſhall next conſider Men of great Titles and Employments.

And *Firſt*, there are none of theſe Perſons, but can find time to Eat, Drink, *&c.* and for frequent Recreations; and if we did not love our Bodies better than our Souls, we ſhould find ſome time to feed them with God's Word, that we might ſay with holy *Job*, *I have eſteemed the Words of his Mouth more than my neceſſary Food, Job* 23. 12. *Daniel*, though burthened with the buſineſs that employed no leſs than Six-ſcore Princes, having an Excellent Spirit and Dexterity, wherewith he managed them, *Dan.* 6. 3. found time to ſtudy the Prophet *Jeremy*, *Dan* 9. 2. and *Machiavel* that Secretary and reputed Oracle of State, could find time

time not only to read, but write Plays; therefore Buſineſs or Recreation can be but ſorry Excuſes againſt a Duty, for which both of them ought to be declined, it being of more Concern than the former, and more Satisfactory than the later. But Pride is often the Cauſe of Men's neglect of the Scriptures, they thinking it too mean and trivial an Employment for Men that are Great and Wiſe enough to Counſel Princes, and are concerned in thoſe Tranſactions that make ſuch a noiſe in the World, and are the Subject of Peoples talk and wonder; to buſie themſelves about the Significations of Words and Phraſes. But though State Affairs are to be regarded, and a States-Man is a very requiſite Employment in a Common-wealth, and they ought to have the reward of their Care and Time; yet I look upon the World with his Eyes, who is ſaid juſtly, to *humble himſelf to behold the things that are done in Heaven and in Earth*, *Pſal.* 113. 6. and meaſures things by the Scale of his Word. Now he who hath made all things for himſelf, and of whom the Spirit ſays, *the Nations are as a Drop of a Bucket, and are counted as the ſmall duſt of the Ballance.* And that *all Nations are before him as nothing, and they are counted to him leſs than Nothing and Vanity*, *Eſay* 40. 13, 17. eſteems the Study and Glory of God, the moſt Important Employment. He Created the World to manifeſt his Wiſdow, Power and Goodneſs; and Created Man an Intelligent Spectator, whoſe Rational Admiration might contribute to the Glory of the Omniſcient and Almighty Architect. And as the Creation of the World manifeſted

ſome of his Attributes, ſo his Providence diſcloſes others. The Revolutions of Monarchies, Fates of Princes, and Deſtinies of Nations are but Inſtances of his Providence. The Deluge was an Inſtance of his Juſtice; and when the World ſhall periſh by Fire, it will ſhew his Goodneſs, preparing a Glorious Manſion for thoſe Glorifyed Bodies. The Angels whom the Viſion of *Daniel* repreſents, preſiding over Kingdoms and Empires, *Dan.* 10. 13. and whoſe great Power is ſo extenſive, that one of them, in a Nights time, could deſtroy a moſt formidable Army, 2 *Kings* 19. 35. I ſay thoſe Spirits, whoſe Nature ſo far exceeds ours, that the Devil unaſſiſted with Vertue, by a Superiority of Nature, could deſpiſe the Objects of our Ambition; for notwithſtanding their high Prerogatives, they think the Myſteries of the Scripture worth looking into, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. nor think they themſelves too good to be Meſſengers and Heraulds of thoſe things we think our ſelves too good to read; and though *Miniſtring Spirits ſent forth to Miniſter to them, who ſhall be Heirs of Salvation, Heb.* 1. 14. think our Inſtruction worthy their concern, though we diſdain it our ſelves; nay, the *Meſſias* who is Styled *King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Rev.* 17. 15. read the Scripture, *Luke* 4. 17. *&c.* both expounding and recommending it; and any one may think a Book of God's Enditing worth reading. When *Moſes* and *Elias* appeared in Glory, to converſe with our Transfigured Saviour upon the Mount; their Diſcourſe was not of Kingdoms, Subverſion of Empires, or thoſe Trifles which Heaven places below Mens Thoughts,

Thoughts, but of his *Deceaſe which he ſhould accompliſh at Jeruſalem*, *Luke* 9. 31. and when *St. Paul* had been caught up into the Third Heaven, 2 *Corinth.* 12. 2. and was refined by his entertainment there, no wonder he ſays there, that *he counteth all things but loſs, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus his Lord*, *Phil.* 3. 8. in *whom Faith cometh by hearing, and that hearing of the Word of God*, *Rom.* 10. 17. and who addreſſes Men to the Scriptures, to teſtify of him; and probably our Saviour uſed that Concluſion ſo frequently to his Diſcourſes, *he that hath Ears to hear let him hear*, *John* 5. 39. to let them know, that Divine Truths deſerve our Employment and utmoſt Attention to ſearch into them. The Intent of this Diſcourſe is, to urge this Truth, that let a Man have what Employment he will, it cannot give him Cauſe to think the Study of the Scriptures a mean One, ſince thus ſays the Lord, *Let not the Wiſe Man Glory in his Wiſdom, neither let the mighty Man Glory in his Might, let not the Rich Man Glory in his Riches; but let him that Glories, Glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth me*, *Jer.* 19. 23, 24. for if the Knowledg of God be ſo Glorious a thing, the ſtudy of that Book which contains the Knowledg of him, cannot be a deſpicable Employment; which muſt be injuriouſly thought by thoſe, who are ſo induſtrious and proud in Prophane Hiſtories, to diſcover an Intreague, by what Art a Knave couſened a Fool, but even with reſpect to his own Profeſſion the Study of the Scriptures is able to recompence a Chriſtian States-Man; for not to mention what *Machia-*

vel ſays of *Moſes* amongſt the famous Legiſlators; the Hiſtorical Part of the Bible is inſpired by an Omniſcient Spirit, and clearly diſcovers the genuin Cauſes of Government, and the Viciſſitudes of Princes and Common-wealths; whereas other Hiſtorians are Subject to great Suſpicions, the ſame tranſaction or event being related ſeveral ways by ſeveral Eye Witneſſes, and the true ſecret of Counſels is kept ſo private, that it is impoſſible to diſcern the Truth and Myſtery of Affairs, ſo much as to be an Impartial Relator of them.

The laſt Objection againſt the Style of the Scriptures conſidered.

The laſt Objection againſt the Style of the Scriptures is, that it is ſo ill adorned, and ſo ill furniſhed with Eloquent Expreſſions, that it is wont to prove inefficacious upon intelligent Readers; to which we may anſwer, that it is very far from being agreeable to Experience, that the Style of the Scripture does make it unoperative upon the generality of it's Readers, if they be not ill indiſpoſed to receive Impreſſions from it. To make this reply good, we are to obſerve, that we have already anſwered that part of the Objection, which ſuppoſes Intelligent Readers are not to be wrought upon by it; and though ſome witty Men have pretended to quarrel with it, yet others as Eminent for Wit and Learning have a high Veneration for it; ſo that the Opinions of the later may Counter-ballance the former; eſpecially if we conſider, that thoſe that diſregard it, ſeem to do ſo, through Vanity and Boldneſs that they may be thought Wits.

But

But to what we have ſaid, we ſhall add, that the greateſt Parts of ſuch as find fault, have not quickneſs enough, to make them paſs for Wits, though they may be endowed with other ſolid Abilities; and yet it is a queſtion, whether the Bible hath not a great Influence upon the latter, ſince it is illuſtrated with the Comments and Writings of a great many Learned Men, whoſe Works have recommended it; beſides a great many Learned Men, have made it evident, that it hath influenced them both by their publick and private Diſcourſes, as well as Sermons, tho' they have not publiſhed Books; whilſt others prove the good Effects of it upon them, by conforming their Lives to the Doctrin of it; which laſt is one of the moſt convincing Proofs, ſince ſeveral Perſons in all Ages have been influenced by it, to renounce the greateſt ſinful Pleaſures, and to expoſe themſelves to the greateſt Dangers and Hardſhips.

And indeed there is ſcarce any People, which the Scripture hath not notably Influenced, in reforming or improving particular Perſons, and by exciting in them an affectionate Veneration for that Book which afforded them ſo much Inſtruction; Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory tells us, at what rates the Bible hath been purchaſed by devout Perſons in ſeveral Ages, when it was dangerous or capital to have it found in their Poſſeſſion. And thoſe who neglect or diſregard the Scripture, are either ſuch as would paſs for Wits, or ſuch as live in Courts. The former think themſelves too Wiſe to be taught, by a Book they think not Eloquent; and as to the later, there are ſeveral whoſe Pleaſure are ſo bewitching and dear

dear to them, that they can like nothing that would divert them from them, or eſpecially oblige them to part with them; or others have ſuch important buſineſs, that they cannot ſpare time to learn, or are too proud to think they want it; yet the Bible hath not wanted Votaries of all Degrees, even of *thoſe that are gorgeouſly apparraled, live delicately, and are in Kings Courts*, the Effects of the Scripture having been as conſpicuous in them as their Stations. Not to mention the Treaſurer of the *Æthiopian* Queen, who could not forbear reading the Prophet *Iſaiah* upon the high-way, and if any paſſage was doubtful he would not ſcruple to ask the Opinion of any Stranger he met with; But not to ſearch the ſacred Records of great Men's ſtudiouſneſs of the Scriptures, ſecular and more recent Hiſtories will inform us, that ſeveral Perſons eminent enough in their Stations, have diſcerned and punctually acknowledged the Prerogative of the Scriptures; and though many Kings have not been of the Number, yet ſome of them in all ages have been Studious of the Bible, as *Edward* the ſixth, who imitated the early and active Piety of *Joaſh*, without imitating his defects, whoſe ſhort and pious Life ſhews, how ſoon amongſt the Temptations of a Court, Grace may ripen a Man for Glory. Another Inſtance was in King *James*, whoſe more than ordinary Study of the Scripture, evidently appeared, from his ſolid defence of ſeveral of it's Truths, againſt miſinterpreters. And in thoſe dark times before the Reformation, that excellent *Aragonian* King *Alphonſus*, notwithſtanding his Contemplation and Wars, could find

find time to read the Bible Forty times with Comments and Gloſſes on it, being not ſo much taken up with his Aſtronomy, and the Contemplation of the Heavens, as to neglect the Study of that Book, which was to ſhew him the way thither. And here we cannot forbear taking Notice of Pope *Urban* the Eighth, who in the midſt of a great many diſtracting Affairs, and Homages as great as are payed to Crowned Heads, could find time to make Reflections on the Scriptures; ſome of whoſe Portions I took a great deal of delight to read, in the handſomeſt Paraphraſes of his pious Muſe. Nor hath that Sex who commonly employ their time in Diverſion, been wanting to add to the Number of Votaries to the Scripture. That Grecian Princeſs *Edoxia* Wife to the Emperor *Theodoſius* by her proſelyted Muſe made *Homer* turn Evangeliſt. And that Excellent Mother and Daughter *Paula* and *Euſtochium* were not a little converſant with the Sacred Writings, as appears from St. *Hierom*, ſome of his Learned Comments being wrote upon their Importunity. And how Eminent a Student, and how great a Proficient Queen *Elizabeth* was, appears from her Life and Reign. And her Syſters Predeceſſor the Lady *Jane*, beſides her Philoſophy, Vertue and Religion, was a conſpicuous Studier of the inſpired Writings, which gave her Underſtanding much above her Age and Sex, but not above her Vertue. Beſides which, ſeveral Eminent, both for the Qualifications of Nature and Fortune, Beauty and Providence, could not by all the Avocations and Pleaſures of a Court be hindered from ſearching into the Scriptures, a

good

good Preſervative againſt theContagion of their Condition. And a great many celebrated Ladies, whoſe fatal Beauties had gained a great many Idolaters, have turned their Eyes that gained ſuch Conqueſts, on thoſe ſevere Writings that undervalues all but the Beauty of the Soul. And it is no wonder that reading the Bible once, ſhould invite us to read it again; ſince not only the Matter it teaches us may invite us, but the Author enjoyns us to ſtudy it. Nor is the affectionate and ſtudious peruſal of the Scriptures, ſo much to be admired as commended in the fair Sex, which is more apt to receive Impreſſions of Devotion than ours; for if we love God and inferiour Things, we muſt needs love the Scriptures, ſince the Object of our Devotion is the Author. When once a Lover hath a true flame kindled in his Breaſt, he will have a reſpect for every thing that belongs to the Miſtriſs, he reſpects, her Walk, her Reſidence, Colours, and any Trifle that belongs to her, gains a reſpect, which belongs not to ſuch as trifles; and certainly if we had any Love for God, we ſhould eſteem his Writings which both repreſent his Perſon to us, and give us alſo the Tokens of his vaſt unmerited Love to us. A devout Father complained of ſome choice Antient Compoſures, becauſe he could not ſee Chriſt named there, and if a great many more were of his Mind, they muſt be extraordinary kind to the Scripture, where the Prophets and Apoſtles unanimouſly celebrate the *Meſſias*; ſo that when I read and compare them, I think my ſelf preſent at our Saviours Triumphant Entrance into *Jeruſalem* where both *thoſe that went before him, and*

and thoſe that followed after him, ſung Hoſanna to the Son of David, Mat. 21. 9. *Mark* 11. 9.

Since then, great Wits, Princes, and Beauties, have not by all their Temptations, been prevailed on to ſlight the Scriptures; but in moſt Ages pious Perſons have been able to ſay in *Jeremy's* Words, *Thy Words were found, and I did eat them; and thy Word was to me the joy and rejoycing of mine Heart, Jerem.* 15. 16. And if the Perſons eminent for theſe good Qualities are but few, it is becauſe there are but few Wiſe and Good Men. And as for Perſons in other Ranks, Numerous Inſtances might be brought, of Men's being addicted to ſtudy the Word of God; if Example were the only Inducement to the ſtudy of it; and if it were not to be admired more for making ſo many Saints, than for ſo many reading it; for *St. Paul* aſſures us, that it is all Divinely inſpired, and contains what is ſufficient to accompliſh God's Servants, 2 *Tim* 3. 16.

But to conſider further, the transforming Power of the Scripture, though ſuch as value the Bible, are more Numerous than it's Adverſaries, yet theſe would be much more Numerous, were the good Seed ſown in good Ground, and did not miſcarry and become fruitleſs thro' intervening Accidents; for thoſe whom the Scripture will have good Effects upon, muſt not be ill diſpoſed to be affected by it, which Prophane Perſons are; for when our Saviour ſays, *If any Man will do the will of him that ſent him, he ſhall know of the Doctrin, whether it be of God or no, John* 7. 17. he intimates, that there is a Diſpoſition in the Soul as well as an Excellency

cellency in the Object to make that Excellency apparent, how valuable ſoever, *St. Paul* ſpeaking of himſelf and other Pen Men, ſays, they *ſpeak Wiſdom amongſt them that are perfect, the Wiſdom of God in a Myſtery, even that hidden one which God ordained before the World, unto our Glory*, 2 *Cor.* 2. 7. *but a Scorner ſeeketh Wiſdom and findeth it not*, *Prov.* 14.6. as the *Sodomites* could not find the Angels to proſtitute and defile them, *Gen.* 19. 5, 11.

But beſides Prophane Wits, there are others who oppoſe the Influence the Scripture might have upon them, either not believing thoſe Truths, or for want of conſidering them. And that want of belief hath occaſioned a great many to ſlight the Scriptures, may eaſily be made evident, if we take Notice, that notwithſtanding the Threats and Puniſhments, and the Rewards propoſed on the other hand, what was ſaid of the perverſe *Jews*, may be applyed to a great many now, *viz. That what they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with Faith in them, that heard it*, *Heb.* 4. 2. becauſe Faith did not unite Faith and them together. But the Efficacy of the Scripture is often loſt for want of due Conſideration; the Diſparity of Belief and due Conſideration being evident in Men's Thoughts of Death. But though Men know, that they muſt dye; yet they live as careleſs as if they were not. Yet when Grace, Sickneſs or Death of a Friend put them in mind of it, it makes ſtrange Alterations and Impreſſions upon them, to think that thoſe Lives muſt have an End, and how the Thoughts of Death, may contribute

contribute to fit Men for it, it being the ſtrongeſt Inducement to deny Ungodly and Worldly Luſts, and to live σωφρόνως καὶ δικαίως, καὶ εὐσεβῶς ἐν τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι, *Soberly, Righteouſly and Godly in this preſent World*, Tit. 2. 12. which we muſt one day leave; *Surgite mortui & venite ad Judicium.*

But notwithſtanding all the diſadvantages hitherto mentioned, we find the Scriptures, by the generality of Readers more valued than any other Books of Ethicks or Devotion; and a great many whoſe Paſſions will not allow them to be guided by it, yet they are perſwaded by it, to forbear a great many things which other Books would not influence them to do. And though *Herod* would not be perſwaded to quit *Herodias*, yet when *John* preached, he did many other things *and heard him gladly*, *Mark* 12. 37. And as our Saviours aſſuming Human Nature and Infirmities, was attended with circumſtances which atteſted his Divinity, ſo where the Majeſty of the Style of the Scriptures is diſguiſed, there are Peculiarities that diſcloſe it. And in ſeveral paſſages, where the Holy Ghoſt ſeems to ſtoop to our Capacities, and condeſcend to the Style of Men, and commands his Secretaries as he did the Prophet *Eſay*, to Write *with a Man's Pen*, *Iſai.* 8. 1. there is ſomething ſo awful and peculiarly his, that retains a Prerogative above Human Writings. *Known unto God are all his Works from the beginning of the World*, *Acts* 15. 18. and God who is *the Knower of Hearts*, *Acts* 1. 24. and whoſe Prerogative it is to *form the Spirit of Man within*, Zech. 1. 1. *Underſtandeth our Thoughts afar off*, *Pſal.*

Pſal. 13. 2. If then we conſider God as the Creator of our Souls, and moſt likely to know the Frame and Nature of what he made, we may eaſily believe, that in a Book written for, & to Men, he hath uſed the propereſt means to work upon them. And indeed, there is a ſtrange kind of Influence in ſome paſſages in Scripture, which no other Book contains, *For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and ſharper than any two edged Sword, piercing even to the dividing aſunder of Soul and Spirit, and of the Joynts and Marrow, and is a Diſcerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart*, *Heb* 4. 12. Wherefore as *Junius*, according to his own confeſſion, was converted from a kind of Atheiſt to a Believer, by reading the 1 Chapter of *John*; and a Jewiſh Rabbi, turned Chriſtian upon reading the 53 of *Eſay*, & the 13 of the *Romans v.* 13. turned St. *Auſtin* from a *Debauch*; and another for fear diſclaimed his Faith, could not forbear Tears upon reading the 16*th v.* of the 50 *Pſalm*; I admire not ſo much that ſuch Examples are not more frequent; and ſeveral who began to read the Scriptures out of Curioſity, have continued that Exerciſe for Conſcience ſake; and many who have read the New Teſtament for the ſake of ſome Language it is tranſlated into, have had the Fortune not unlike *Zacheus*, who climbing up into a Tree to ſee our Saviour paſs by, became a Proſelyte and Convert, *Luke* 19. from *v.* 1. to *v.* 10. entertaining him both in his Houſe and Heart, *Mat.* 13. 19, 20. *&c.* And though the Teſtimony of the Church be the firſt, it is not the principal Inducement to believe the Divinity of the Bible; it's own Prerogatives raiſing

raiſing that into Faith, which the Church only left as Opinion. And the *Samaritans* who firſt believed Chriſt upon the Womans Report, when they converſed with him ſaid, *Now we believe not becauſe of this ſaying, for we have heard him our ſelves, and know that this is indeed the Chriſt, the Saviour of the World*, John 4. 39, —42. and ſo the Scripture by it's intrinſick Excellences and Prerogatives, manifeſts it's Divine Origin. And even where it hath no Ornaments of Language, it's ſo perſwaſive, that it's not ſtanding in need of them, is the greater Argument of it's Nobleneſs; to which we may apply that of *St. Paul*, thereby thinking to recommend his Doctrin. *That his Speech and his Preaching was not with the enticing Words of Man's Wiſdom*, 2 Cor. 2. 1—4. uſing ſuch a plain and unadorned way, *That their Faith might not ſtand in the Wiſdom of Men, but in the Power of God*, ver. 5. And though God does ſometimes uſe ſuch Rhetorical Expreſſions, that he ſeems to *draw us with the Cords of a Man*; ſo ſometimes he uſes ſuch Expreſſions, as by commanding our Obedience, Reverence and Aſſent, convince us from whence they came, who is not obliged to make uſe of what meaſures we think fit, but can bring his Purpoſes about with, or without any, but his Will. And as a Loadſtone draws what the moſt ſparkling Jewels cannot, and things Armed with Iron, ſooner than with Silver, ſo the Scripture hath a greater Influence than the moſt florid Style, and often hath a better Effect on Men, where the Style is without Ornaments, than where it is cloathed with Rhetorick.

Other Books of Devotion worthy our Reading.

But though I cannot but eſteem the Truths of Scripture as moſt Valuable, and attribute to it the Prerogative, yet I cannot but allow, but that other Books of Devotion, are ſo handſomely Pen'd, and Wrote ſo Pathetically, that a good Man may grow better by reading them, and a bad Man can hardly read them without growing better, and though ſuch Books attain to a high Degree of Excellency, yet they come ſhort of, and are inferior to, the Scripture; for if *the Words of the Wiſe be like Nails faſtened by the Maſters of the Aſſemblies, Eccl.* 12. 11. the Nail will be faſter and deeper, according to the ſtrength of the Hand that drives it; and the Scripture being the Word of God muſt have the greater Influence; for as the Apoſtle ſays, the *Theſſalonians received it not as the Word of Men, but as it is in Truth, the Word of God,* 1 *Theſ.* 2. 13. to which he adds, *that it did alſo effectually Work in them that believed.* And though it be true, that the obſcurity of ſome Texts will require as much Circumlocution to explain them, as the Richneſs of others will bear, yet it is a fault for Men to think they can expreſs the Holy Ghoſts meaning in properer Words than his own; the Expreſſions in Scripture being ſo conciſe and ſinewy, that they cannot be ſtretched without being enervated; and Paraphraſes though handſom, as much wrong them, as a mixture of Silver does Gold. And though ſome Texts are leſs beautiful, yet work better, when beaten to Powder, or mixed with other Cordial Ingredients; yet ſeveral Expreſſions in Scripture like Diamonds loſe their Luſtre and cutting Edge when ground to Duſt. And as other

other Books loſe of their Eſteem the Second reading, the Bible rather gains eſteem the better we are acquainted with it. And the inſpired Poet, deſcribing a Man he attributes Bleſſedneſs to, ſays, his *Study is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law will he meditate Day and Night, Pſal.* 1. 2. which Emphatically ſhews, that this ſtudy affords ſo much delight to Devout and Intelligent Proſecutors of it, that like the *Hallalujahs* of the Bleſſed, the Duty is a Pleaſure, and the Exerciſe a Recompence of Piety. And if the Study of the Scripture *opens his Eyes to diſcern the hidden Wonders contained in it, Pſal.* 119. 8. he ought to ſay with the *Pſalmiſt, I rejoyce at thy Word, as one that findeth great ſpoil, Pſal* 119. 162. being as much ſatisfyed as Navigators that diſcover unknown Countries. And when I contemplate *Moſes* and *Elias* talking with Chriſt, I mean the Law and Prophets concording with the Goſpel, I cannot forbear crying out with *Peter, it is good for me to be here, Mat.* 17. *ver.* 4. ſo that I cannot wonder the *Pſalmiſt* ſhould compare the Tranſcendent Sweetneſs of the Scripture to that of Honey. And though what we have ſaid is no more than true of this ſacred Book, it will be leſs fit to apply to it, that of the Heathen Poet,

Materiam ſuperabat opus,

than what the Pſalmiſt ſays, *The Kings Daughter is all Glorious within,* as well as *that Her Cloathing is of wrought Gold, Pſalm.* 45. 33.

CHAP. V.

Containing some Physico-Theological Considerations about the Possibility of a Resurrection.

Some Considerations to prevent Ambiguities in this Discourse.

BEfore we proceed to consider the Question, whether to believe the Resurrection of the Dead, which the Christian Religion teaches, be not to believe an Impossibility; it is requisite to state the Question clearly, that what we mean may be free from Ambiguities. And *First*, the Question is not whether the Resurrection be knowable and to be proved directly by the Light of Nature, Gods Purpose of Raising the dead, being known only by what is revealed in Scriptures, and only to be proved by his Veracity and Power, who being an Almighty Agent, we have Reason to believe what he hath promised to perform. Nor is the Question, whether the Resurrection is to be performed by mere Physical Agents, no Instances having appeared of it? And though it may seem not absolutely repugnant to Reason, that these scattered Parts of a Dead Body should be rejoyned, yet it may seem morally impossible, that this should happen to all Persons at the end of the World; so that when we treat of this, we mean that it is possible, since God hath promised there shall be one, which shall be Effected, not by the ordinary Course of Nature but his own Power; for which Reason our Saviour, when he silenced the *Sadduces* said, *You Err, not knowing*

ing the Scripture nor the Power of God. And when the Angel told the bleſſed Virgin, that ſhe ſhould conceive without the Intervention of a Man (which was a Production of a Body out of a ſmall Portion of Matter in a Supernatural way) he concludes, *That nothing ſhall prove impoſſible to God.* Beſides, we ſuppoſe that the Article about the Reſurrection contains not all that hath been ſaid by any particular Sect of Men, or any private Writer, but only what is taught in the Scriptures, and therefore if any Opinions have entertained or propoſed any thing about it, which may ſeem unreaſonable, ſuch Opinions ought to be eſteemed raſh and unfriendly to the Growth of Chriſtianity.

How a Body may be reputed the ſame.

To clear the way further for this Diſcourſe, we ſhall conſider, what is neceſſary and ſufficient to make a Portion of Matter, conſidered at different Times and Places, fit to be reputed the ſame Body, the generality of Men uſing a great Latitude in the received Forms of ſpeaking. Thus *Rome* is ſaid to be the ſame City, though often ruined, and perhaps not one of the firſt Houſes left ſtanding. And a Univerſity is ſaid to be the ſame, though ſome Colleges fall to ruin, and others are built, and once in an Age, all the Perſons decreaſe that compoſed it & New ones ſucceed. And the River *Thames* is ſaid to be the ſame, though the ſame Water that ran under the Bridg an hour ago is not there now. And the Flame of a Candle is ſaid to be the ſame for ſeveral Hours, though every Minute, new kindled Particles compoſe it. And not only the Vulgar, but Antient, Philoſophers have

been puzzled about the Notion of Identity, as when it was diſputed whether the Ship of *Theſeus* was the ſame, when it had been ſo often repaired, that ſcarce any of the old Timber remained. And even in Metaphyſicks it is a difficult Matter to eſtabliſh a true Notion of Identity. For as different Men conceive this or that Quality or aggregate of Qualities eſſential to a Body, and to give it it's Denomination; ſo one Man thinks it to be the ſame, becauſe it retains that Quality he thought to be the moſt Eſſential, whilſt another thinks it changed, becauſe it hath loſt that Quality which he thought was it's denominating Quality or Attribute. Thus Philoſophers and Phyſitians diſagree about Water and Ice, ſome thinking the later to be only Water diſguiſed; it being eaſily reduced into the former; being freed from exceſſive and adventitious Cold; others think Ice to be a diſtinct Species of Bodies, ſince it hath loſt it's Fluidity and becomes Solid. And the Peripateticks and Chymiſts differ about the *Calces* of burnt Bodies, the firſt referring them to Earth, as permanent and fixed Bodies, whilſt the later take them to be *ſui generis*, as containing a Cauſtick Salt; whereas Earth ought to be inſipid, ſo Wood, Aſhes, Limeſtone and Coral, when calcined have a biting Taſte; and ſome of them that are inſipid may eaſily be reduced into Metals, as the *Calces* of Lead and Copper. So that it needs not be thought ſtrange, that the familiar Expreſſions about the ſameneſs of the Body, in the Greek and Hebrew Language, ſhould not be ſo preciſe as might be requiſite to maintain the Reſurrection in a Rigid Senſe.

But

But to proceed to the Second Conſideration; which is: That it is not Inconſiſtent with the Holy Scripture, that a ſmall Quantity of the Matter of a Body increaſed by Aſſimilation, or a due Appoſition, may bear the Name of the former Body. For *St. Paul* 1 *Corinth. chap.* 15. ſays, *But ſome Men will ſay, how are the Dead raiſed? and with what Body do they come,* ver. 35. which he thus explains, *ver.* 37. *that which thou ſoweſt, thou ſoweſt not that Body that ſhall be, but bare grain, it may chance of Wheat, or of ſome other grain, and that God gives this Seed a Body as he thought fit, to each Seed it's own Body,* ver. 38. where conſidering that a hundred grains may riſe from one, but a ſmall Portion of the Seed can be in ſo many grains, not to mention what is contained in the Root, Stalks and Chaff. We ſhall not here conſider, whether a Plaſtick Power may be inferred from hence, lodged in the Matter of a Dead Body, which being divinely excited, may aſſume Matter, and by faſhioning it, may repair and augment itſelf. Nor ſhall we diſpute what may be inferred from Leaven, which differs from other Dough, but in a few Qualities, which in a little time hath the Power to work upon and ferment a great Quantity of other Dough; nor ſhall we urge what *Kircherus*, *Quercetanus*, and others affirm to have done, *viz.* that they have by a gentle heat, reproduced in well cloſed Vials, the *Ideas* of Plants produced by the Fire; and I am informed, that the Aſhes of a Plant, like the red Poppy, being ſown in a Garden, did unexpectedly produce larger and fairer Plants, than had been ſeen in thoſe Parts. So

The Notion of Identity deduced from Scripture.

that there may remain a Plaſtick Power in the fixed Particles of a Vegetable, diſſipated by the Violence of the fire, which may enable diſpoſed Matter to reproduce ſuch a Body as was deſtroyed. But we need not have recourſe to ſuch a Power, ſince an External Omnipotent Agent is ſufficient, ſince *Gen.* 11. *ver.* 21, 22. *the Lord God cauſed a deep ſleep to fall upon Adam, and he ſlept, and he took one of his Ribs, and cloſed up the Fleſh inſtead thereof. And the Rib which the Lord God had taken from Man, made he a Woman and brought her to the Man.* Where ſo ſmall a Portion of Matter as a Rib without a Spermatick Quality, was by God Almighty's Power formed into a Body; whence it appears, that if God Almighty pleaſes, he can add a greater Quantity of Matter to a Portion of a Human Body, whether newly created or pre-exiſtent, which new Body may congruouſly enough be ſaid to be made of the former, according to Scripture Expreſſions. For which Reaſon, *Adam ver.* 23. called his Wife *Iſha*, *Woman*, becauſe ſhe was taken out of *Iſh*, which is in our Verſion rendered *Man.* And in *Ezekiels* Viſion, a Valley full of dry Bones were to riſe up in an Army of Living Men, which were by God Almighty's Power brought together, and by a Supernatural Appoſition of Matter furniſhed with Sinews, Fleſh and Skins, *Ezek.* 37. ver. 7, 8. to which was added, a Vivifying Spirit, *ver.* 9, 10. which made them ſtand on their feet alive. So that according to Scripture Expreſſions, it is conſonant to ſay, that a Portion of the Matter of a Dead Body, ſupplyed by God, with an Additional Quantity of Matter, and formed into

into a Human Body, may be reputed the ſame Body, which was before Dead, which appears from the Expreſſion ſet down in the 10. *verſe*, where God calling for the enlivening Spirit, nominates the compleat Bodies, *Theſe Slain*, though not yet revived, as if they were the ſame that had been killed.

An Objection againſt the Poſſibility of the Reſurrection.

Theſe things premiſed, we ſhall proceed to examin thoſe Objections againſt the Impoſſibility of the Reſurrection, which are ſaid to demonſtrate it, the ſubſtance of which may be compriſed in this Objection, *viz.* That when a Man is dead, ſeveral Parts of his Body will be reſolved into Streams, which are moved to and fro in the Air, and the ſofter Parts are ſo much ſcattered by Corruption, that it is impoſſible they ſhould be brought together again, ſo as to form a Body after the ſame manner as when firſt alive. And it ſeems much more Impoſſible, when a Body is devoured by Wild Beaſts, the particles of that Body being not only ſcattered, but tranſmuted into new Subſtances; and this reunion is ſtill more difficult, if the Body be devoured by *Cannibals*, where the ſame Subſtance belonging to two Perſons, they cannot both have it reunited at one time, or that any Relation it had to the firſt Perſon ſhould remain after it was united to the other, and turned into the Subſtance of that Body.

Anſwered.

In anſwer to this we ſhall offer, *Firſt*, That Man's Body is in a perpetual changing Condition, all it's Dimenſions growing from a Corpuſculum to the full Stature of a Man, and by the Appoſition and Aſſimilation of new Parts may grow to a conſiderable Bulk, and to a certain

tain Bulk as well as Age; and whilſt it is in this condition there is a conſtant diſcharge of a great many Parts by inſenſible Tranſpiration, ſo that in a great compaſs of Time, a great part of the ſubſtance of a Man's Body muſt be changed, yet the Bones are of a laſting Texture, and continue for a great many Years. *Secondly*, There is no determinate ſize to make a Body paſs for the ſame, an Embryo, a middle siz'd Man, and one of Fourſcore, being ſtill accounted the ſame; and though a fat Man ſhould grow lean he is ſtill accounted the ſame Perſon. We may further conſider, that a Body may conſiſt of, or abound with, ſuch Corpuſcles, as being variouſly aſſociated with other Bodies, and tho' diſguiſed with ſuch Mixtures, yet retain their own Nature, ſo Gold diſſolved in *aq. Regis* appears to be a Liquor, and when precipitated, looks like a Salt or Vitriol; and by a certain Operation may be made part of the fuel of a Flame, being joyned with another Body, it may be reduced to a Glaſs, and when precipitated with Mercury, it makes a glorious tranſparent Powder; precipitated with Spirit of Urine, or Oyl of *Tartar per deliquium*, it forms a fulminating Clax, which goes off eaſily, yet is ſtronger than Gunpowder; yet it ſtill retains it's Nature, ſince by Chymical Operations it may be reduced to it's Metalline Form. Mercury may alſo be put into different forms, as that of a Vapour, ſometimes it looks like inſipid Water, ſometimes it appears in the form of a red Powder, ſometimes of a white or yellow One, and ſometimes of a Chriſtalline Salt or a Malleable Metal;

Metal; yet an Artiſt will ſoon reduce it to it's native ſhape.

Inſtances of the permanency of Particles of Matter.

But Inſtances of the Permanences of Corpuſcles, paſſing under ſeveral Diſguiſes, may be found amongſt Vegetables and Animals. *Hippocrates* mentions a Child he purged with the Milk of an Animal, that had taken *Elaterium*, and I have obſerved that Butter in *Savoy* taſted ſo rank of a Weed that grows there in the Spring, that it made it Nauſeous, which was otherwiſe very good. And if we conſider how many changes it muſt undergo in the Body of the Cow, as well as the ſeparations afterwards; as when the Cream is ſeparated from the Milk, and the unctious parts of the Cream from the Serum or Butter-milk, it will be evident what diſguiſes a Body may undergo without loſing it's Nature, the Eſſential Attributes of that Body appearing to the Taſte, though no ſenſible Quality otherwiſe remains. And not to mention the Fiſhy Taſte of Sea Birds; it hath been obſerved, that Hogs, which in *Ireland* feed upon a ſort of ſhelfiſh, have ſo ſtrong a taſte of it, that the fleſh is ſo rank of it, that ſtrangers cannot eat it; the red juice of a prickle Pear will paſs the ſeveral ſtrainers and digeſtions of the Body without being altered, ſo that it tinges the Urine as if the Perſon piſſed Blood; and it is obſerved, that a Fruit called *Janipa* or *Junipa* in the *Charibee* Iſlands, when it falls from the Trees is eat by the Hogs, and colours their fleſh and fat of a Violet colour, as it does the fleſh of Parrots and other Birds. And a Vegetable diſſolved by very corroſive Liquors, notwithſtanding retains it's ſenſible Qualities, as Colour, Taſte, and Smell.

It

It appears hence, how the Particles of a Body may retain their Natures, though under various Diſguiſes, yet they may be cleared of thoſe Diſguiſes, by ſuch means as a great many unskilled with the Operations of Nature would not think on, nor judge probable; as Mercury though never ſo much diſguiſed, may be reduced to it's running form. And in Glaſs or Lead, though the tranſmutation of the Metal ſeems to be ſo great, that that brittle Metal is turned into a tranſparent brittle Maſs, yet this may be ſo altered, as to recover from it an Opacious Malleable Lead. And though there be ſeveral ways of ſeparating Bodies, beſides ſtrictly united, yet by proper Precipitants ſeveral ſeparations may be made which one would not think of; for it is not requiſite in all Precipitations, that the Precipitant Body ſhould make a ſeparation of the Body, diſſolved from the Maſs of that Liquor it was united with, but yet ſhould not be able to do it without joyning it's own Corpuſcles with thoſe of the Body it ſhould reſcue, and thus make a new compoſition; for ſome Bodies may Precipitate others without uniting themſelves with them, is evident in ſeparating Silver from Copper; for if the mixture be diſſolved in *aq. fortis*, if the ſolution be diluted with twenty times as much Water, and a Copper Plate be put into it, the Silver will preſently adhere to the Plate in the form of a bright Metal, which wants no further Reduction: and Mercury diſguiſed may ſoon be reduced into a running Quickſilver. And if the Precipitants are well appropriated to the Bodies they are to recover, Agents very unlikely may have

have very ſtrange Effects; for if a piece of Camphire be put upon Oyl of Vitriol, and they be ſhaken together now and then, the Camphire will be ſo corroded by the Oyl, that it will quite diſappear and loſe it's Smell, ſo that there will be no ſign of Camphire in the Mixture, yet if the Mixture be poured upon a large Quantity of Water, a white brittle, ſtrong ſcented Camphire will preſently ſwim upon the Water, which will be inflamable as before.

How Bodies differ from one another.

To which we ſhall add, that two Bodies being but two Portions of Matter in different Forms, they may ſucceſſively change; ſo that they may recover their firſt Mechanical Affections. And that all Bodies are made of one common Matter, and only differ as they have different Forms, is plain from the School-Mens *Materia prima*; and as the true Notion of Body conſiſts in it's Extenſion or Impenetrability together, it will follow, the differences cannot conſiſt in the Nature of the Matter of which we can have but one Uniform Conception; but from Mechanical Affections as *Size*, *Motion*, *Poſition*, *&c.* So that it will not be incongruous, if an Intelligent Agent watch a determinate Portion of Matter, through the various Forms it may put on till it is gone through ſeveral Changes, and then take hold of it in that form it was laſt in, and extricate it from thoſe Bodies it was mixed with, it will return to it's firſt form, and if it was part of another Body to be reproduced, it will be capable of having the ſame Relation, it formerly had: for if you cut a Globe of ſoft Wax into two *Hemiſpheres*, and of one make Cones, Cylinders, *&c.* and make the other

other into the form of Pye-cruſt with Dough, and make Cakes, Wafers, *&c.* if by ſolution or otherwiſe a Man ſeparate the Wax, and in a Mould form Hemiſpheres, thoſe other forms of Cones, *&c.* will be deſtroyed, and by joyning the two Hemiſpheres together, the Wax will make a Globe as at the firſt. And though *Præcipitate* made *per ſe* appears different from common Mercury, being different in Colour, and if you give but four or five grains it will vomit or purge, yet by a due heat it may be reduced to a running Mercury again.

An Inference from the foregoing Inſtances.

But here it may be requiſite to take Notice, that the Chriſtian Doctrin does not aſcribe the Reſurrection to *Nature*, or any created Agent, but to the immediate Operation of God, who hath declared, before the laſt Judgment he will raiſe the Dead, and therefore though we have ſhewn how Bodies may be recovered from their diſguiſes, yet we are far from propoſing ſuch ways, as the beſt, for ſuch an End; for as the generality of Men would not believe, that Bodies ſeemingly altered to a quite different Nature could ſo eaſily be reſtored by Chymical ways to their former ſtate; ſo till Natural Philoſophy is better underſtood, we can ſcarce imagin, what Methods a further diſcovery of the Myſteries of Art and Nature may lead us to in reproducing Bodies, much leſs can our weak Knowledg determin, what Phyſical means the wiſe Author of the Univerſe may make uſe of to bring the Reſurrection to paſs, ſince we can have but imperfect apprehenſions of the Powers of one, whoſe Nature is ſo incomparably Superior to ours. For we ſee, that a Child cannot conceive how Geometricians

Geometricians meaſure inacceſſible Heights and Diſtances, much leſs how a Coſmographer can determine the Compaſs of the Earth and Sea, or an Aſtronomer find out, how far it is from the Earth to the Moon, and tell Years beforehand what day and hour ſhe ſhall be Eclipſed. And in the Indies not only Children but Illiterate Men could not conceive how the Europians converſe by the uſe of Paper, at ſeveral Miles Diſtance, nor how Gunners could immediately produce Thunder and Lightening, and kill Men at a Diſtance, and foretel Eclipſes, which things made the *Spaniards* be looked upon as Men above Human Nature. Now thoſe who have a true Notion of a Deity, as a Being, both Omnipotent and Omniſcient, will readily grant that he can do what is poſſible to be done any way of diſpoſing of Matter and Motion, ſince at the firſt he could produce Worlds, and contrive the Parts of the Univerſal Matter, ſo as to form the Bodies of the firſt Man and Woman. And that his Power may extend to reunite the Soul and Body when ſeparated by Death, is evident from his raiſing *Lazarus*, and Chriſt himſelf, of the later of which we have proof enough to convince any one that will be influenced by competent Arguments. And that God's Miraculous Power as well as Veracity will be concerned in raiſing the Dead, appears from our Saviours Admonition to the *Sadduces*, when he tells them that the Cauſes of their Errors are, their not knowing the Scriptures, where he hath ſaid he will raiſe the Dead, nor the Power of God by which he is able to perform his promiſe. And that God's Omnipotency is ingaged

gaged is intimated by *St. Paul*, *Act.* 26. 8. where he asks King *Agrippa*, why he ſhould think ἄπιστον, *not to be believed*, that God ſhould raiſe the Dead, and the ſame Apoſtle ſpeaking of Chriſt returning in Glory and Power of his Father to judge the World, when he hath told us that this Divine Judge ſhall transfigure (μετασχηματίζειν) *our vile Bodies*, he adds *that it will be according to the powerful Working* (ἐνέργειαν) *whereby he is able even to ſubdue all things to himſelf*, *Phil.* 3. 21.

A Concluſion drawn from the preceding Diſcourſe.

But to apply what we have ſaid to our preſent purpoſe, ſince a Human Body is not confined to a determinate Bulk, but that the ſame Soul joyned to aptly Organized Matter may conſtitute the ſame Man, notwithſtanding the different bigneſs of the Body to which the Soul is united, and ſince a Body in a great Meaſure conſiſts of Bones, which are of a determinate Nature, not apt to be deſtroyed either by the Operations of the Earth or Fire, and ſince amongſt the fluid Parts there is ſuch a conſtant expence of parts of them by inſenſible Tranſpiration, and ſince the Parts of a Body diſſolved may retain their own Nature under various alterations and diſguiſes, and ſince a Human Body may ſtill be the ſame, though repaired or augmented by an addition of congruous Matter; ſince then theſe things may be poſſible, it may not be impoſſible for an Intelligent Being, that can do any thing that is not contradictory to the Nature of things or his own, to order the Parts of a Human Body ſo, that partly out of thoſe which remain in the Bones, or which are ſeparated by Inſenſible Tranſpiration, or partly of

of thoſe which are reſolved, a competent Number may be preſerved, or retrieved, ſo that being freed from their Diſguiſes, or ſeparated from other Parts of Matter, he may reunite them, or make a convenient Addition of other Matter; ſo as to reproduce a Body which being united with the former Soul, may in a Senſe agreeable to the Expreſſions of the Scripture, compoſe the ſame Man again, whoſe Soul and Body were ſeparated by Death.

The Doctrin of the Reſurrection otherwiſe explained.

From hence it appears, that the Doctrin of the Reſurrection in a ſtrict and literal Senſe, hath no inſuperable Difficulties, to render it impoſſible, though it would much facilitate and explain ſo abſtruſe a thing, if a greater Latitude were allowed in expounding the Article of the Reſurrection; for if we allow the Human Soul to be the Form of a Man, and that whatever Organized Body is joyned to it, it is the ſame Man, it will be ſufficient to explain the Doctrin of the Reſurrection to ſay, that in reſpect of a Future State, the Soul ſhall no longer continue in a ſeparate State, but ſhall be united, not with an Ethereal or the like fluid Matter, but to ſuch a Subſtance, though different from our *Houſes of Clay*, *Job* 4. 19. as may in a tollerable Propriety of Speech be called a Human Body.

The Poſſibility of a Body's being Glorifyed.

Thoſe who aſſent to what we have ſaid of the Poſſibility of the Reſurrection, will more readily admit the Qualifications, Religion aſcribes to the Glorifyed Bodies of the raiſed Saints; for ſuppoſing the Hiſtory of the Scriptures to be true, God Almighty's Power hath already ſhewn as much as we need infer, ſometimes

laying aſide the Natural Effects of Bodies upon one another, or endowing human Bodies or others with preternatural Qualities. And ſince Agility, which is indifferent to Gravity and Levity, Incorruption, Tranſparency and Opacity, Figure, Colour, *&c.* are but Mechanical Affections of Matter, it may not be unreaſonable to believe, that the Omnipotent Author of the Laws of Nature, who hath Power to regulate all the *Phænomena* of Qualities, may eſtabliſh or alter them in any Portion of Matter, and conſequently, in that which forms a Human Body. Thus though Iron be eight times heavier than Water, *Eliſha*'s Helve emerged from the Bottom to the Top of the Water; and *St. Peter* was able to walk upon the Water, the Gravity of his Body being ſuſpended during the time of his Maſters commands. And Flame forgot it's Uſual Effects in *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Fiery Furnace; and *Daniels* three Companions walked unharmed in that which deſtroyed the kindlers of thoſe Flames. And the *Iſraelites Manna* which was periſhable in a Day, laſted two, and whole Ages uncorrupted, laid up as a Memorial before the Ark. And our Saviours Body, which after his Reſurrection retained the Impreſſions of the Nails and Spear, yet it had the Qualifications of the Glorifyed Bodies of the Saints, *St. Paul* telling us, *that our Vile Bodies ſhall be transformed, into the likeneſs of his Glorious Body*, which had nobler Qualities than before his Death. And as the Apoſtle tells us, that this Change in the Bodies of the Saints ſhall be effected by the *irreſiſtable Power of Chriſt*, we cannot ſcruple to acknowledg

ledg ſuch an Effect from ſuch an Agent, if we conſider what a ſlight Alteration of the Texture of a Body may alter it's Qualities, and make them better; for without any viſible Addition I have altered a dark opacous Lead into a fine Coloured Tranſparent Glaſs, ſpecifically Lighter; and what Advantagious changes ſuch an Agent as God may make in a Portion of Matter will eaſily be allowed, if we obſerve, that when a Candle is blown out, and by holding another lighted to the aſcending ſmoak, an opacous, dark, languid and fætid ſmoak, preſently looſes it's fætor, and is changed into a moſt Active Penetrating and Shining Body.

CHAP. VI.

Containing a Diſcourſe of the High Veneration Man's Intellect owes to God.

Men Diſcourſe too familiarly of God and his Works.

IT is not a little, to be admired that ſo many Men and ſome of them Divines, ſhould ſo little conſider what God is, or what they are themſelves, as to talk of him with as much freedom and unconcern, as of ſome Geometrical Figure, or Mechanical Engin; as if the Nature and Perfections of that unparalled Being were Objects of their Intellect; and ſuch abſtruſe Subjects, within the reach of Human Reaſon, or familiar Objects of Senſe.

Their Presumption and Inconsiderateness will be manifest, if we consider, *First*, that God may have divers Attributes and Perfections that are unknown to us; and *Secondly*, The Effects and Properties of those we know are so sublime and abstruse, as to surpass our Comprehension, and give us Reason to pay the Author of them the Highest Wonder and Veneration.

The Knowledg of God's Attributes attained by the Study of his Works.

To arrive at the Knowledg of God's Attributes there are two ways; *viz.* The Contemplation of his Works, and the Consideration and Study of his Word; yet these may come short of acquainting us with all his Perfections. For though Philosophers deduce the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God, from the Visible Impressions of them upon his Works; yet those Divine Attributes which we chiefly observe, are such as his Creatures have a Resemblance or an Imperfect Participation of. And though the Excellences of the Divine Nature may be represented a great many ways; yet so perfect and exuberant a Being may have Excellences, which cannot be expressed or represented in any Parts of the Visible World known to us; for some of those Attributes which we do know, and which are Relative to his Creatures, would be undiscovered by our Imperfect Intellects, did we not consider some things that are actually done by God; for supposing Angels, before the Creation of the World knew no more than we do now, they could scarce conceive, that God had a Power of Creating Matter, and producing Local Motion, (which neither the Peripateticks nor Epicurean Philosophers

Philoſophers dreamed of) the Nature and Being of both, being attended with ſo many Difficulties; much leſs could thoſe Angels conceive how Rational Souls and Human Bodies act upon one another; whence it ſeems probable, that if God hath formed other Worlds, the Creatures contained in them may have Attributes which we know not of, and which appear not in the Works that we are acquainted with.

And by the ſtudy of his Word.

But to proceed to the Second help, we have to acquire the Knowledg of the Divine Attributes, the Revelations God hath afforded us in holy Scripture by that *Spirit*, which *Searches all things, even* τὰ βάθη τοῦ Θεοῦ *the Depths of God*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 10. have given us the Knowledg of ſeveral things, which we ſhould not, or but very dimly, diſcover'd by the Light of Nature. The Promulgators of the Goſpel declared to Men, *the whole Counſel of God*, Act. 20. 27. neceſſary to Salvation, but diſcloſed not *the whole Nature of God who inhabits an unapproachable Light*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 16. beyond the Reach of Human Speculations; for which Reaſon the Proper Name of God amongſt the *Jews*, ſignifyed that his Nature was incomprehenſible; which is no Talmudical Tradition, ſince our Saviour and his Apoſtles, when they ſpoke of God, or to him, expreſſed themſelves in the *Nomen Tetragrammaton* or four lettered Name. And the Scripture further informs us, that in this Life, *we know but in part, and ſee things but darkly as in a Glaſs*, 1 *Corinth.* 13. 12. and we are ſo far ſhort from *finding God out to perfection*, *Job* 11. 7. in reſpect of his Nature and Attri-

butes, that the *Ways* of his Providence are *untraceable*, *Rom.* 11. 33.

A Third way of tracing God's Attributes.

For theſe Reaſons, we are inclined to think, that God may have Attributes, we know not of. And though his Attributes may be further known, by conſidering the *Idea* of a *Being* infinitely perfect, yet there are ſeveral Attributes contained in this *Idea* in a General way, which are not particularly diſcovered by it. For though, when Divine Perfections come to our Knowledg by any means, we may conclude it comprized in the comprehenſive Notion of a Being abſolutely perfect; yet the contemplation of that General *Idea* would never give us the Knowledg of that Perfection, which is only learned from Particularities, ſo that thoſe Diſcoveries are not derived from, but rather referred to, that Notion.

Our Knowledg of the Attributes we know but imperfect.

Hence it appearing, that God may have divers Attributes, as well as Excellences and Perfections unknown to us; we ſhall next ſhew, that we have but an Imperfect Knowledg of thoſe Perfections we do know, in compariſon of what he hath of them himſelf; he poſſeſſing them in a Tranſcendent Degree, whereas we have but faint reſemblances of them. Inſtances of this may be brought from his Power and Wiſdom which Attributes belong chiefly to him, becauſe we are not able to confer them upon our ſelves, as we do other Vertues and Perfections; for though a Man may be as Chaſte, Temperate and Juſt, or as Good as he pleaſes, ſuch Vertues depending on his Will, yet he is ſenſible he cannot be as Knowing, Wiſe, or Powerful as he would be; and therefore Power and

Wiſdom

Wiſdom muſt flow from an Excellency and Superiority of Nature God's Power & Wiſdom evidently appearing both in his Corporeal & Incorporeal Works. The firſt Inſtance of his Power is the immenſe Quantity of Matter Created for the Formation of the Univerſe, and the Force of Local Motion given to it, and which it is regulated in.

The Vaſtneſs of the Univerſe an Argument of his Power.

The Vaſtneſs of that Maſs of Matter the World conſiſts of, is very Stupendious, what is diſcovered by Human Eyes aſſiſted with Dioptrical Glaſſes, being unconceivably Vaſt. The fixed Stars, which to the naked Eye appear but like Spangles, are found by Artiſts to be above a hundred times bigger than the Earth, and yet theſe Stars appear much leſs through Teleſcopes being like Specks or Phyſical Points of Light, the falſe Lights which makes them appear ſo large to the Naked Eye being taken off by the help of thoſe Inſtruments. And the Sun which is ſome Millions of Miles nearer than the fixed Stars, and at ſo ſmall a Diſtance appears not half a foot broad, is reckoned to be a hundred & threeſcore times bigger than the Earth, and by ſome is eſteemed ten thouſand times bigger than our Globe, and by others is thought much Vaſter. And by the *Parallexes* and other Proofs, this Globe which is divided into ſo many Kingdoms, Empires, and Seas, is accounted 5400 German Leagues in Circuit, and conſequently, is 10,882,080,000 Cubick Miles in ſolid Meaſure, and according to modern Computation is reckoned 26000 Miles, yet it is but a Phyſical Point in Compariſon of the Univerſe. And perhaps the greater Globes of the Sun and

fixed Stars in compariſon o the fluid Part of the Univerſe would be but as a Nut to the Ocean. And a modern Aſtronomer ſays, that if the Stars of the Sky were all crouded into one Globe, and placed at a convenient Diſtance, they would appear to us no bigger than a Star of the firſt Magnitude. And I am apt to think, that that Part of the Univerſe which is already diſcovered; will be but of ſmall extent to what more perfect Teleſcopes may hereafter repreſent to us; and yet then the viſible Part of the World will be far from extending to the bounds of the Univerſe. And the *Carteſians* are ſo far from thinking the bounds of the Univerſe are to be aſſigned, that they hold the Coporeal World to be Indefinite.

Local Motion an Argument of his Power.

But to conſider further the Quantity of Local Motion, which the Divine Power hath given the Parts of the Univerſe, and conſtantly maintains them in. This we may in ſome Meaſure eſtimate by the Velocity of the greater Bodies in Motion, and the Motion of the remaining Parts of the Univerſe. The firſt Inſtance we ſhall mention is the Velocity of the Earth's Motion about it's Axis in twenty four Hours according to *Copernicus*; for this Globe which is about 27000 Miles in Circuit, according to *Gaſſendus* moves ſo faſt, that a point fixed in the *Æquator* of the Earth, in a Second Minute moves 200 Toiſes or Fathoms, which is 1200 Feet, ſo that a Bullet ſcarce flyes with greater Velocity out of a Cannon. But the Motion of the Earth is not comparable to that of the fixed Stars, which are ſuppoſed to move about the Earth in twenty four Hours; for if

as *Tycho* obſerves, the Firmament be Fourteen Thouſand Semidiameters of the Earth diſtant, a fixed Star, as *Mullerius* calculates moves 3,53323 Miles in an hour, which is 52555 Miles in a Minute. And in a Second, which is no longer than the ſtroke of a Pulſe in a Healthful Man, 875 Miles, which is 3000 times faſter than a Cannon Bullet moves in the Air. *Ptolomy* indeed ſays, that a fixed Star in the Æquinoctial moves but three Semidiameters of the Earth, in a Second; but *Ricciolus Almag nov. lib. 9. Sect. 4. cap. 6.* ſays, their Motion is 50 times greater than *Ptolomy's* Account, and 70 times greater than *Tycho's*; for according to *Ricciolus* a fixed Star moves 157282 German Leagues in a Second Minute which is 629128 EngliſhMiles.

The Motion of fluids conſidered.

And that Part of the Univerſe, which ſeems quieſcent, and yet hath Motion put into it, is ſo great, that perhaps the Motion diſtributed amongſt theſe Bodies may exceed the Quantity of Motion given to the fixed Stars; for the fixed Stars or Planets or all the Globes of the Univerſe, lucid or opacous, have but a ſmall Proportion to the Interſtellar Part of the Univerſe. And though we ſhould allow theſe Globes ſolid, which can ſcarce be proved by any, the *Carteſians* accounting the Sun fluid, & perhaps the reſt may be ſo too; yet each Globe moves in an ambient fluid, of much larger Extent than itſelf; ſo that the fluid Parts of the Univerſe muſt very much exceed the ſolid; and ſince the Parts of Fluid Bodies are conſtantly in various Motions, though the Liquor ſeems to be at reſt, theſe fluids muſt contain a vaſt Quantity of Motion. And how great

great a Quantity of Motion may be in fluids is evident from the violent Motions of the Parts of Fluids, which may be perceived when their ordinary Motions happen to be disturbed, or excited by extraordinary Accidents. This appears in the Effects of Winds and Whirlwinds, which are but Streams of invisible Air; which may move in a streight Line, or Accidentally about a Common Centre. But the violence of this Motion is more evident in Gun-powder, when a Mine is charged with it, where the flame or some subtle Æthereal Substance is constantly near in the Air; for when the Powder is touched but with one Spark of Fire, it's Motion is so rapid as to throw up into the Air, whole Houses, thick Walls, as well as the Rocks that they were built upon.

And their Velocity measured.

But that we may better guess at the Velocity of the Parts of Gunpowder, we shall consider what Motion it impresses on a Bullet, shot out of a Gun, which *Mersennus* says is about 75 Fathom, *i. e.* 450 foot in a second, which is in the 60 part of a Minute. And if we allow the *Cartesian* Opinion, that the Planets are turned about their Axis, by the Motion of the Æthereal Vortices they swim in, the motion of that Æthereal Matter on the remotest Confines of the Earth's Vortex, is much more rapid than that upon the surface of the Earth; and yet as we have observed, a place situated under the Æquator, moves as quick as a Bullet out of a Cannon. And if with *Tycho* we allow, that the Globes of the Firmament move about the Centre in twenty four hours, the Motions of the Celestial Matter must be vastly rapid.

These

God's wonderful Power and Wisdom inferred from what we have observed.

These considerations may give us enlarged Conceptions of the Power as well as Wisdom of our great Creator, who hath given such a wonderful Quantity of Motion to Matter, as well as maintains it; and cannot only set Bounds to the raging Sea, and say to its proud Waves, hither shalt thou come and no further; but moderates the stupendious rapid Motions of the Globes, and the intercurrent Fluids; so that notwithstanding the greatness of the Bulk, and the rapidness of their Motions, they go more regularly than a Watch without exorbitances; the Sun moving under the Eclyptick, without deviating from it's Motion. And if the Firmament moves not exactly round in four and twenty Hours, which is the most rapid Motion, it's retardation is so regular, that since *Hipparchus*'s time which is 2000 Years ago, the first Star in *Aries*, then near the beginning of it, is not yet come to the last degree of that Sign.

Of God's Wisdom.

Thus much having been said of God Almighty's Power, we shall proceed to consider his Wisdom, which Attribute, the most elevated Understandings pay the highest Veneration to; when they meet with it but in Men, where it is very Imperfect. Gods Wisdom, which St. *Paul* styles πολυποίκιλος *Eph.* 3. 10. *i. e.* manifold, is expressed two ways. Sometimes appearing in familiar Objects, so that superficial Spectators may take Notice of it; but in many things the *Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledg* seem hid, *Col.* 2. 5. and require a diligent and intelligent Considerer to find them out.

The

In what Objects God's Wiſdom is conſidered.

The Objects which ſhew his Wiſdom, are either Material and Viſible, or the Inviſible and Immaterial Creatures of God. In the firſt, which make up the Corporeal World or Univerſe, we ſhall obſerve the excellent contrivance of particular Bodies; their great Variety and Number, their Symmetry, and their Connection and Dependance on one another.

In the Fabrick of Animals.

And *Firſt*, If we ſearch the curious and excellent contrivance of a Human Body by diligent Anatomical Enquiries, we cannot otherwiſe conceive what an excellent piece of Workmanſhip it is, where we may employ St. *Pauls* expreſſions on another Occaſion, *That the fooliſh things of God are wiſer than Men, and the weak things of God ſtronger than Men*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 25. and thus we may ſay, that the meaneſt Creature God hath made, far exceeds the moſt Excellent pieces of Workmanſhip made by Men, no Clockwork being comparable to the Mechaniſm of an Aſs or a Frog.

Their variety.

But *Secondly*, The variety as well as fabrick of God's Creatures ſhew his Wiſdom; human contrivances are very narrow, and often limited to ſuch as are but of one ſort, as an Artiſt that can build a Houſe cannot build a Ship, and an Excellent Clock-maker may not make a good Watch, nor contrive a Fowling piece or a Wind-mill. But God hath Created not only four principal kinds of Living Creatures, as Birds, Beaſts, Fiſhes and Reptiles, which are differently provided for the Stations they were to act in, but he hath alſo formed ſeveral Species of each of them, which differ from others of the ſame kind. For the Fabrick of a Beaſt is not

not only different from that of a Bird or Fiſh, but the Mechaniſm of particular Animals of the ſame Species is different, as in thoſe that chew the Cud from thoſe that do not; alſo a Hog and a Hair differ in their Entrails; ſo likewiſe there is a difference betwixt a Parrot and a Bat, *&c.* and if Vegetables are conſidered as well as Living Creatures, there are manifold varieties of conſpicuous Inſtances of God's Wiſdom, above ſix thouſand ſorts of Plants having been reckoned up ſeveral Years ago.

Their Symmetry.

But *Thirdly*, The Excellent Symmetry of the various parts of Animals is another Inſtance of God's Wiſdom; an Animal being a Complex Engin, made up of ſeveral Parts, which may be conſidered as ſubordinate Inſtruments, or Engins adapted excellently for particular Uſes. As an Eye is an Excellent Optical Inſtrument, and the Hand is adapted for a great many Mechanical Uſes, *Ariſtotle* calling it the Organ of Organs. Where it argues the admirable Wiſdom of the *Former of all things*, *Jer.* 10. 16. that each part is formed of ſuch a particular bigneſs, as is moſt ſuitable for the compleatneſs and welfare of the whole Animal. Which ſhews, that the great Artiſt could conſider the whole Fabrick at once, and ſee what was beſt to be done, that the whole Animal and each Part ſhould be admirably provided for at once; whereas many an Artiſt can make a ſingle Engin, that knows not how to manage a Complex one, or an Aggregate of Engins. Nor can every one make a good Pump, that can make a Ship Pump, and we ſee, that a Pendulum Clock, that is moved with Weights regularly aſhoar, will not go in a ſailing Ship.

The

Their Uſefulneſs to one another.

The *Fourth* Argument of God's Wiſdom, is the dependance that his Corporeal Creatures have on one another, and their uſefulneſs to each other; and this is either as the Parts of an Animal have relation to one another, or as Animals have reference or dependance on one another. As for the firſt reſpect, the Parts of a Human Body are ſo formed, that beſides the Functions ſome of them perform for the good of the whole, as the Stomach digeſts Nouriſhment, the Brain ſupplies Spirits, and the Kidneys ſeparate the ſuperfluous Serum, there are other particular Parts that are ſubſervient to one another. And in Diſeaſes, the conſent of the Parts is not only evident, but other uſes diſcover themſelves, as when one Part is affected it ſhews what dependance other Parts have on it. To the ſecond Relation, thoſe Parts which diſtinguiſh both Sexes belong, as ſerving to the Propagation of their Species. And not here to mention the diſtance and ſituation of the Sun, and it's Oblique Motions under the Ecliptick; as alſo the compenſation the Qualities of ſome Bodies make, for the different Qualities in others, as the great heat and dryneſs in the Torrid Zone would make thoſe Countries Barren, were it not for the Eteſian and Trade Winds, which laſt moſt of the Hot Seaſon, which are aſſiſted by the length of the Nights, as alſo by the long Rains at ſet times, and the periodical overflowing of the Rivers; and in ſome places, where the Winds in the Night blow towards the Sea from the Land, and from the Sea towards the Land in the Day; by which means the Ground is moiſtened and refreſhed, and the Air

Air cooled, ſo that ſeveral Kingdoms and Provinces are inhabited and fruitful, which the Antients thought inhabitable. And not to mention the uſefulneſs of ſeveral other Creatures to Mankind, we ſhall only obſerve, how other things are ſerviceable to Men and other Animals: Thus Lambs, *&c.* are brought forth into the World in the Spring, when tender Graſs and other things are provided for their Uſe. And Silk-Worms hatch their Eggs when Mulbery Trees bud, on whoſe Leaves theſe Inſects feed, the Nouriſhment being tender whilſt the Worms themſelves are ſo, and grow ſtronger as the Inſects get ſtrength and vigour. And that which is to be admired is, that in a *Semen Animatum* the future Parts, as well as their Functions and Actions are firſt delineated, which is but a ſmall Portion of Matter, and ſeems Homogenious, and is altogether fluid; and which is yet ſtranger is, that the Plaſtick and Prolifick Power after it hath lain hid for ſeveral Years, at laſt produces ſuch an exquiſite Machine.

The Opinions of ſome Philoſophers conſidered.

Hitherto we have taken Notice of God's Works, as contained in the viſible Part of the World; we ſhall now conſider the Opinions of ſome Philoſophers, the *Peripateticks* believing the World to be finite, and the *Carteſians* indefinite, though in reality they amount to little more than the ſame; for the World muſt either be finite or infinite. If it be bounded, thoſe that believe a Deity who is infinite, cannot deny, but that God is able to make other Worlds as well as ours. As for the *Epicureans*, who thought the World was made of Atoms, by Chance, ſince Atoms and Chance were not wanting,

wanting, allowed that Chance actually made many Worlds, of which this is one. The *Carteſians* allowing the Indefiniteneſs of the Univerſe, allow that this World is but a ſmall Part of the Univerſe, ſince it may extend beyond the utmoſt Parts of the bounds that are viſible to our Eyes.

Whether there be other and different Syſtems from ours.

Now if we allow, that God hath made other Worlds beſides this, it is probable that his manifold Wiſdom is exerciſed in productions in thoſe, different from what we are acquainted with. And though we ſuppoſe no more than one Univerſe, as all that is viſible to us, is but a part of that vaſtly extended aggregate of Bodies; ſo if we ſuppoſe ſome of the Celeſtial Globes, whether viſible or out of ſight, to be peculiar Syſtems, the conſideration will not be very different; for as the fixed Stars are far more diſtant than the Planets, and the Sun which is the neareſt to us, hath a whole Syſtem of Planets moving about it; ſo ſome other of the fixed Stars may be a Centre to ſome other Syſtem of Celeſtial Globes; for we ſee, that ſome Planets much leſs than the fixed Stars, have Globes that move about them, as the *Earth* which hath the *Moon*; and *Saturn* is not unaccompanied; and *Jupiter* hath no leſs than four *Satellites* that move about him, yet theſe attendants of *Saturn* and *Jupiter* are not diſcernable to the naked Eye, and conſequently were unknown to the Antients, who knew not the uſe of Teleſcopes. Now if there be other Syſtems beſides this of ours, it is not unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that God hath ſhewn his unexhauſted Wiſdom in the Government and Contrivance

trivance of Syſtems, which are managed after a different manner from ours; for as the Loadſtone here is different from all other Stones or Bodies that are not Magnetical, and ſeems rather to be conveighed to it from ſome other World, than to be originally belonging to it. When *America* was firſt found out, few of the Plants and ſcarce any of the Animals were of the ſame Species with thoſe Living in Europe.

Some Notions in reſpect of Theory propoſed.

Now as the Omniſcient Architect contrived the Original Fabrick of the World out of the Parts of Matter very different from the Structure of our Syſtem, we may ſuppoſe a great deal of difference betwixt the *Phænomena* and Productions of thoſe Syſtems and ours, though the difference ſhould only conſiſt in the difference of two or three Laws of Motion; for if every entire Body hath a Motive Power, (as Philoſophers think) this power of exciting Motion in other Bodies without looſing it's own, will be of conſiderable advantage, if we conſider, that Local Motion is the chief of Second Cauſes in producing *Phænomena*; and therefore the *Phænomena* may be as different as the Cauſes they ariſe from. Nor is it abſurd to imagin, that God Created ſome Parts of Matter quieſcent, till ſome outward Agent put them in Motion, and that others were in continual Motion, without looſing that Power by the Motion they communicated to others. And the Laws of Propagating this Motion may be different from what is eſtabliſhed in this World, ſo that one half of the Motion that is communicated from a Body of a particular Bulk and Velocity to

another that is quieſcent, or moves ſlower than it ſelf, ſhall paſs from a Movent to the Body it impels, though all the Circumſtances, except the Laws of Motion be the ſame. Theſe things may not ſeem ſo extravagant as at the firſt ſight, ſince in common Philoſophy the Notion of Local Motion is but imperfectly propoſed, and the Rules ſo far from being well as not to be at all eſtabliſhed.

The Carteſian principles conſidered.

And though the *Carteſian* Principles are received by a great many Learned Men, yet it ſeems rather upon the Authority of the Author, than any clear Experience or any cogent Reaſon. And as for that moſt Uſeful Rule, *That there is always the ſame Quantity of Motion in the World; every Body that moves another, looſing as much as of it's own as it produces in another*, his Argument drawn from the Immutability of God is more Metaphyſical than Cogent, the Properties and Extent of his Immutability not being ſo well known to us, to allow it an Argument *à Priori*, and how it will be demonſtrated *à Poſteriori* is not ſo evident, ſince it may not only be queſtioned, whether agreeable to the Experience of Communicated Motions, ſince we have but little Experience of the Rules of Motion in the Celeſtial Regions, amongſt the Æthereal Parts of the Univerſe. Since then the *Carteſian* Rules can neither be evinced *à Priori* nor *à Poſteriori*, it may be as reaſonable to ſuppoſe, *that other Syſtems may have ſome peculiar Laws of Motion*, becauſe they differ from thoſe *Carteſian* Rules, the greateſt Parts of which are undemonſtrated.

But

But though Suppoſitions and Conjectures may illuſtrate our *Idea*'s of Divine things, yet that we cannot adequately underſtand the Power and Wiſdom of God, and the Effects which are worthy of their Cauſe, is evident, from what we ſee within the Bounds of our own Syſtem, and the Variety of Bodies that make up the Univerſe. For there being a vaſt Number of diſtinct as well as complex Engins, and many ſubordinate ones, guided and governed according to their Reſpective Natures, with reſpect to the Catholick Laws of the Univerſe, without Errors or Intermiſſion, we cannot but pay the higheſt Wonder, and humbleſt Adoration to that Supreme Being, who is the Cauſe of all theſe Things. The Antient *Epicureans* urged the Belief of a Divine Providence as incredible, becauſe inconceivable, thinking it too diſtracting Employments to proſecute ſo many different Intentions, as to cauſe the Sun to Shine in one place; to Rain in another; the Wind to blow in another, *&c.* But ſince upon good Proof we believe, what they thought Impoſſible, and that God can perform what they could not conceive, we cannot ſufficiently admire the Vaſtneſs of his Wiſdom, which is extended throughout the Univerſe; and what was an Excuſe for their Unbelief, ought to be a Motive to our Veneration of that Tranſcendent Power.

The higheſt Wonder and Adoration due to God.

God's Wiſdom and Power are in a great Meaſure illuſtrated by his Corporeal Works; but his Divine Perfections are more fully expreſſed by thoſe Rational and Immaterial Beings he hath made; as the Picture of an Apple or Cherry-

God's Wiſdom beſt known by his immaterial Works.

Tree do not ſo much expreſs the skill of a Painter, as thoſe pieces which repreſent the Paſſions of the Mind, or the Laws of Opticks and Decency. And if we had as much Knowledg of God's Incorporeal Creatures, as of thoſe that are Viſible, God's Wiſdom in the Government and Conduct of them is the more Glorious, than in the Management of his Corporeal Works, as Spirits are more Noble than Bodies; for let Matter be never ſo fine, the beſt contrivance can but make an Engin of it, void of Intellect and Will, and it's Excellences above the groſſeſt and moſt imperfect Matter, depend only on Mechanical Affections, as Size, Shape, *&c.* which can neither occaſion their own Motion, nor put a ſtop to it. Whereas Immaterial Subſtances, have Underſtanding and Will, and a Principle of Acting accordingly. And though God can exerciſe an Abſolute Dominion over his Creatures, whether Immaterial or not; yet for as much as he governs Spirits as Intelligent, Free and Powerful Beings, as good and bad Angels, and to make them Inſtruments of his Glory, which a great many with all their Subtlety and Obſtinacy oppoſe, ſuch Wiſdom and Providence muſt far exceed what happens in the Management of Corporeal Beings; for though Engins are contrived to act as we pleaſe, Angels and Human Souls can Act as they pleaſe, and it is much eaſier for a Watch-maker to alter the faults of a Watch than to regulate the Affections and Actions of his Son.

And

And here we shall take Notice, that Angels, whether good or bad, are very Intelligent Beings, capable of a great Variety of Knowledg, and endowed with a Will capable of various Influences upon the Understandings, and Numerous Exertions and Actions: so that each Angel being capable of various Moral States may be esteemed as a distinct Species of the Intellectual kind; and the Government of one *Dæmon* may as much shew the Wisdom and Power of God, as of a whole *Species* of Inanimate Bodies, which are determined to comply with the first Laws of Motion, from which they have no Wills to Deviate. *Angels a great Specimen of God's Power*

We are informed by the Scriptures, of the *manifold Wisdom of God*, and that the *Angels themselves desire to pry into those Mysteries.* And when our Saviour speaks of the time of his coming to Judgment, being not known to any, he says, *no, not the Angels themselves, but to his Father only*, he intimates their Knowledg to be much more Excellent and Superior to ours; which may be the Reason they are Styled *Angels of Light.* And as the Angels are Numerous, and of different Orders, some being Arch-Angels, and others Princes of Empires; God assigns them not only Important Employments in Heaven and Earth, but such as require Interfering designs to carry them on. And as the same Scripture tells us of the Devil and his Angels, and the *Great Dragon* that drew the third Part of the Stars from Heaven with his Tail, as also a *Legion of Devils* in a single Man, there seems to be a Government in the Kingdom of Darkness, the Monarch of it, who is exceeding Pow-

erful being Styled the Prince of this World, ſome of his Officers being Entitled Rulers of Principalities, Powers and Rulers of the Darkneſs of this World, *Epheſ.* 6. 12, ſo that the Subjects muſt be Numerous, being Enemies to God and Man; ſo that the Devil is Styled the *Adverſary*, the *Tempter*, and a *Murtherer*, and as they are very Falſe and Crafty, the Devil is called the Father of Lies, the Old Serpent, and his Deſigns, the *Wiles* and *Depths* of *Satan*. And that their Malice is both Active and Reſtleſs as well as Great, is evident, ſince the Devil is ſaid, *to walk about like a roaring Lyon ſeeking whom he may devour*, 1 *Pet. ver.* 8.

and Wiſdom.

If we conſider theſe things, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that were we ſenſible enough to diſcover the Methods of Divine Wiſdom, in managing thoſe Angelical or Diabolical Communities, we ſhould be raviſhed with Admiration, how ſuch Intelligent, Free, Powerful and Immortal Agents without Violence to Nature, ſhould conſpire to fulfil the Laws, or accompliſh the Ends of that Great *Theocriſy*, which comprizes all the Whole Creation. And to make the Crafty Actions of evil Men, and Spirits, ſubſervient to his Wiſe and Juſt Ends, is no leſs Argument of God's Wiſdom, than it is of a Maſter or Pilot to obtain his Port againſt a Contrary and Tempeſtuous Wind.

His Wiſdom argued from the Day of Judgment.

But a more illuſtrious and diffuſed Inſtance of the Divine Wiſdom as well as Juſtice and Mercy, will appear at that Day, when Good Chriſtians ſhall have a larger proſpect than our Saviour had, when at once he viewed *all the Kingdoms of the World*, *Luke* 4. 5. and ſhall behold

behold a more Numerous Aſſembly than came to the Dedication of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Golden Image, *viz. People of all Nations and Languages*, *Dan.* 3. For when by the Voice and Trumpet of the Arch-Angel, the Fal'n-Angels, and all the Offsprings of Adam, ſhall be called to Judgment on that *Decretory Day* & when *the Dead ſhall be raiſed, and the Books ſhall be opened*, the Wiſdom of God will appear in it's full Splendour and *Meridian* Luſtre. When it will appear, that Divine Providence hath obſerved, both the faults of private Perſons, Families and Societies, as well as the Fates of Kingdoms and Empires, which he hath over-ruled with his Incomparable Wiſdom. Then thoſe Politicians, who thought to out-wit Providence, will find their Subtleties out-done, and themſelves *taken in their own Craftineſs, and their Councils turned into Fooliſhneſs*; and then the amazed World will find, that whilſt they craftily purſued their own Ends, they only accompliſhed God's; and thoſe Hypocrites, who pretended to Religion, as an Inſtrument of Secular Deſigns, will not only find them defeated; but, that they were Subſervient to the advancing of that Religion they never Deſigned. It is accounted a great Piece of Skill to keep in order, a Complicated Clock, or a Men of War, and the Artiſt is valued and eſteemed for his Conduct, according to the Intricacy of the Structure. But it muſt be extreamly Aſtoniſhing to ſee what Wiſdom and Providence was requiſite to guide and overrule Millions of Engins, which are furniſhed with free Will, ſo as to find them ſubſervient at the laſt to Purpoſes deſigned by Divine Pro-

vidence, who is both Holy, Juſt and Good. To conclude, when all Nations ſhall appear at once, and their Intreagues ſhall be diſcovered without diſguiſe, and the ſecrets of Hearts laid open, from the Beginning to the End of Time, and appear to be ſo contrived and continued by the Author of the World and of Men, that their various Actions and Deſigns, conſpire to the Accompliſhment of ſo worthy a Deſign, ſo great an Effect will be a vaſt Argument of his Stupendious Wiſdom; ſo that Human Intellects muſt confeſs that nothing but a Divine and Omniſcient Author could bring about ſuch Ends.

And the Redemption of Man.

But the Wiſdom and Power of God may yet be illuſtrated by the Oeconomy of Man's Salvation, where the Divine Attributes have their Particular Agences, ſo that their Admirable Co-operations are great Arguments of his Wiſdom. This made the Apoſtle call it, *the great Myſtery of Godlineſs*, 1 *Tim.* 7. 16. which deſerves both our Wonder and Gratitude. In the Work of Man's Redemption, there are ſome Foot-ſteps of Divine Wiſdom, ſo conſpicuous, that Men of Ordinary Parts diſcover them. But ſome parts of this Work are ſo Sublime, which are called the Depths of God, Βάθη τῦ Θεῦ, 1 *Cor.* 11. 10, 11, 7. and contain ſo much of the *Wiſdom of God in a Myſtery*, that Human Underſtandings are not able to handle ſo abſtruſe a Subject: It requiring, that a Man ſhould know in a great Meaſure, the Nature of Spirits, and of the Father of them, God Himſelf; likewiſe of the Will, Intellect, *&c.* as alſo of the Soul of Man, *Adam's* State in Paradiſe; as alſo what Influence his

Fall

Fall had on Poſterity, and the Nature of God's Natural and Vindictive Juſtice; the Ends of God's inflicting Puniſhment; the unparalelled Perſon of Chriſt, the Qualifications requiſite for his being our Redeemer, the Conditions God made with Man, in reſpect both of Works and Grace: God's Decrees with reſpect to a Future State, the Secret and Powerful Effects of Grace, and how the Spirit of God Influences Men's Souls, which he converts and ſanctifyes to Glory. I ſay there are ſo many things to be conſidered to Treat of Chriſt's Redemption, that we may ſay with *St. Paul*, *who is ſufficient for theſe things*; ſo that it being beyond the reach of Human Capacities, we have the more reaſon to admire the Wiſdom of it. Nor is it a leſs Stupendious Token of his Wiſdom, to reconcile his inflexible Juſtice, and his exuberant Mercy, all the Problems of *Diophantus*, *Alexandrinus*, *&c.* requiring not ſo much attention to a greater Number of Proportions and Congruities at once to make them ſubſervient to the ſame Ends as the Problem propounded by the Infinite Goodneſs of God to his Divine Wiſdom, *viz. The Redemption of loſt and perverſe Mankind upon the Terms laid down in the Goſpel*, which at once promote God's Glory and Man's Felicity.

God's Wiſdom not fully to be repreſented.

From what we have ſaid of the Greatneſs of God's Power and Wiſdom, it appears, that his Attributes are Divine and Adorable, but if one more knowing, or an Angel, had undertaken the manifeſtation of the Divine Wiſdom, he would have been unable to repreſent his matchleſs Excellency; for none but an Infinite Underſtanding

Underſtanding can comprehend the Wiſdom of an Omniſcient Being. But we have conſidered God's Wiſdom apparent in his Works, with reſpect to them and not to us, they having an abſolute Excellency in their Nature, and for that Reaſon worthy both our Wonder and Praiſe, as they are Rational, and we are Rational Beings; ſo *Zeuxis* admired the Skill of *Apelles*, and Modern Geometricians and Mathematicians admire *Archimedes*. But as this ſort of Contemplation of God's Works is only irrelative, we are apt only to regard the Excellences we diſcover, without being affected with a juſt ſenſe of the Superiority of the Divine Intellect, as we might be if we conſidered, how much lyes undiſcover'd of thoſe things we know, and what an imperfect Knowledg we have of what we do know. But God's Attributes might yet further appear worthy of our Eſteem and Veneration, ſhould we conſider, beſides his Wiſdom and Power, his other Perfections, as (not to mention thoſe Incommunicable ones, his ſelf-Experience, ſelf-Sufficiency and Independency,) his Goodneſs to all Creatures, his Mercy, Juſtice, Veracity, *&c.* beſides he may have ſeveral Attributes and Perfections which we know not of, nor can ſo much as gueſs at; the Fecundity of the Divine Nature being ſo inexhauſtible, and the Productions of an Almighty Power being attended with Infinite Wiſdom, which his Exuberant Goodneſs is pleaſed to communicate. And further, by the *Idea* we have of him, and ſome of the Attributes we know he hath, we may be induced to believe, that he hath other Perfections that we have no parti-

particular Knowledg of; for not to mention those irrelative ones, as his self-Existence, Eternity, Simplicity and Independency, which we know by considering him as an absolutely perfect Being, he hath relative Perfections which we come to the Knowledg of, by Experience, of what he hath done for his Creatures. As God's Mercy was unknown to *Adam* before his Fall, and his Fidelity in respect of his Promises of the Messias before *the fulness of time* in which they were fulfilled. Since therefore, God's Perfections respect the Natures and Conditions of his Creatures, and their Actions towards him, as well as his towards them, and we know not but that he hath several Creatures, and hath several Relations toward them according to their Conditions, he may have Attributes in respect of them which we know not of.

God's Attributes shew his Majesty and challenge our Adoration.

But let the Attributes we know, or do not, be what they will, such Divine Perfections must flow from a most Glorious Majesty, whose Intelligent Works ought to pay him the highest Veneration; for this Reason Angels, who are the most excellent of his Creatures are represented as always employed both in obeying and serving as well as praising and adoring the Divine Majesty. The word *Angel* in the Original Language is a Name of Ministry, the Hebrew *Malach*, and the Greek Ἄγγελος, signifying a Messenger. And our Saviour in his prescribed Form of Prayer tells us, that the Will of God is done in Heaven, since he proposes the imitation of it in Earth; and as they style themselves the Apostles, *Fellow-Servants*, *Rev.* 19. 10. so the Celestial *Envoys* willingly go upon the

themean eſt Errands, not minding ſo much to whom, or upon what they go, as by whom they are ſent; thus an Angel was ſent to *Hagar*, *Gen.* 21. 17. &c. a fugitive ſlave, ready to periſh in a Wilderneſs, to direct her to a Well of Water, and to give her Information about her Child; and another vindicates an Aſs againſt a falſe Prophet, *Numb.* 22. 33. And the Scripture tells us, *they are all Miniſtring Spirits, ſent forth to Miniſter for them who ſhall be Heirs of Salvation*, *Heb.* 1. 14.

From the Example of Angels, &c.

And though Angels affect the moſt Excellent Perſons in their glorious appearance, with Amazement, if not Terror, and force their Veneration; their Preſence being accompanied with a ſurprizing Splendor, *Dan.* 10. 9, 11, 17. *Luke.* 1. 29. ſo that one of them is repreſented as *Inlightning the Earth with his Glory*, *Rev.* 18. 1. and though they are ſo Numerous, that we are told of *Millions*, *Legions*, *Thouſand Thouſands*, *and ten Thouſand times ten Thouſand of them*, yet theſe glorious Celeſtial Courtiers, who are Intelligent and Spotleſs, ſtand about the Throne of God (as the Prophet in his Viſion told the two Kings of *Judah* and *Iſrael*, that *he ſaw the Lord ſitting on his Throne, and all the Hoſt of Heaven ſtanding by him on his right hand and on his left*,) not to Gaze, but Miniſter, *Daniel* 7. 10. And *Iſaiah* repreſents the *Seraphims Iſa.* 6. 2. covering their Faces before their Maker elevated on his Throne. And that they adore and celebrate his Majeſty is evident, ſince they cry to one another, *Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God of Hoſts, the whole Earth is full of his Glory.* So that it is not to be wondered,

wondered, that Angels ſhould ſhew that profound Reſpect, ſince the greater their Knowledg is, the greater Veneration will be had by an Intelligent Being, for an Object whoſe Perfections are not to be fathomed by Angelical Intellects; for as a Line extended cannot make a Superficies, ſo created Perfections cannot be amplifyed by *Idea's* into Divine Ones. Creatures are but ſhadows of the Creator, and not Images of him, and thoſe Signatures they have of his Perfections may raiſe the Intellect to contemplate the Divine Original; as the Picture or written Name of a Watch, or a Man, exhibit only the *Idea* of the External Surface, and repreſent not their Internal Conſtitution, which they only aſſiſt to give us an *Idea* of. And tho' Angels have Prerogatives above Men, yet they are Creatures infinitely inferior to God; and though a Thouſand is more than Ten, and a Million than a Thouſand, yet the greateſt hath no Compariſon with an Infinite Number; and ſince the Angels ſhew ſo much reverence to the Supreme Being, *who are greater in Power and Might than we*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 11. as they are propoſed for our Imitation, *Judg.* 9. they ought to put us in Mind, what *Ecſtatick Reſpect* we owe him, and whenever we ſpeak to, or of him, we ought to conſider the vaſt Diſtance betwixt our moſt Perfect and Omnipotent Creator, and an Impotent Creature; a moſt Holy God, and a Sinful Man.

Were

God's Wiſdom, &c. inferred from Conjectures about other Worlds and Spirits.

Were we to ſuppoſe other Worlds different from ours, and thoſe Syſtems furniſhed with Creatures, whoſe Fabrick and Motions, and conſequently their Properties and Operations alſo vary; thoſe differences will be peculiar Inſtances as well as Productions of *the manifold Wiſdom of the Former of all things, or Maker of the whole*, according to the Original, *Jer.* 51. 19. And if the other Worlds are furniſhed with different Creatures, and the Vortices, and their inviſible Parts as the *Air* and *Æther*, with Intelligent Inviſible Spirits, it will ſtill increaſe our *Ideas* of his Wiſdom both in framing and governing thoſe Worlds and Spirits. And tho' the Scripture expreſly mentions no other Spirits but Angels and Devils, yet in the Hiſtory of the Creation he does not ſpeak of the Production of Angels; and elſewhere repreſents them of ſeveral Orders, both good and bad, as appears by their ſeveral Names, *Epheſ.* 6. and 12. compared with *Col.* 1. 17. without denying other ſorts of Spirits; and if the Globe we live on, and the Air are frequented with Spirits; we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that the Celeſtial Globes and the Æthereal Parts of them are not quite deſtitute; we ſhall not here mention the Opinions of the *Pythagoreans* and *Platoniſts*, whoſe Maſter ſays thus of the *Dæmons* in the Superior Part of the World, Δαίμονες ἀέριον γένος. Nor ſhall we be poſitive in declaring the Senſe of theſe Expreſſions, *The Prince of the Power of the Air*, (Air in the Hebrew ſometimes ſignifying Heaven,) *Epheſ.* 11. 2. where thoſe Adverſaries of the Goſpel are called *Spiritual Wickedneſſes*, or, according to the

the *Syriac* Language, *Spirits of Wickedneſs*, i. e. *Wicked Spirits*, not in *high*, but *heavenly* places, which ſeem to favour our preſent Conjectures. To which we ſhall add, that *Grotius* on *Epheſ.* 11. 2. ſays, it was the Opinion of the Jews, that all, even the Starry Heavens, are full of Spirits, on *Epheſ.* 6. 12. which muſt be a further Argument of God's Wiſdom and Power, who not only created but governs ſo many Spiritual Beings of various kinds, endowed with Intellects and Wills of their own; eſpecially ſince moſt of them may be in a probational State, as *Adam* and *Eve* were in *Eden*, and the Angels before they *left their firſt Eſtate. Epiſ. Jude* 6. and if we conſider Children who in their tender Years want the full uſe of their Reaſon; and Ideots and Madmen who want fit Organs for the Exerciſe of it, God's Wiſdom and Power will be further evinced, and appear illuſtrious and wonderful in the Government of ſuch Communities of Intellectual Creatures.

God's Excellences far above Ours.

There is a vaſt Difference betwixt the Creator and his Creatures, who are only the Productions of his Power and Will, the Divine Attributes tranſcending thoſe faint reſemblances imprinted upon his Creatures. For Gods Nature is ſo excellent, that ſuch Qualities as are Vertues in Men, cannot be aſcribed to God without Derogation, as Temperance, Valour, Humility, *&c.* eſpecially Chaſtity, Faith, Patience and Liberality, which only belong to Man in his mortal, infirm Condition. But thoſe matchleſs Excellences, as Eternity, Independency, Life, Underſtanding, Will, *&c.* muſt needs belong

belong to God, the Author of thoſe Reſemblances we have of them; for *He that planteth the Ear, ſhall he not hear? He that formed the Eye ſhall he not ſee? He that teaches Man Knowledg ſhall he not know?* The Perfections of the Creatures flowing from the Divine Excellences of God, as Beams do from the Sun. So that the Extent of Divine Wiſdom is what is contained both in *Him* and *Them*: And as Human Underſtanding values it ſelf upon Wiſdom and Knowledg, ſo it eſteems nothing more in other Beings, and is jealous of being ſurpaſſed in them.

God's Intellects ſuperior to Man.

But to evince the Superiority of God's Knowledg to ours, we may conſider, that God knows a great many things, which we are ignorant of, *viz.* moſt of his Works both Corporeal and Immaterial; *known unto God are all his Works from the beginning of the World*, nay more, his infinite Power to make more than he hath or will make. And further, what we know but in part, he knows fully; and diſcerns thoſe things clearly, which we have but a dim ſight of, and hath a certain Knowledg, of what we underſtand by fallible Mediums.

The Peculiar Prerogative of God's Knowledg above Mans.

But the great Prerogative of our Creator is, that he knows himſelf, which is too wonderful for a Man, and out of the reach of Angelical Intellects, an Infinite Knowledg being only able to underſtand the Nature of God, which is Infinite. Nor is our Knowledg of his Corporeal Works, to be compared to his, for the *Phænomena*, which Philoſophers pretend to explain, ſuppoſe the preſent Fabrick of the Univerſe, and the ſetled Laws of Motion. But God knows, how the World was firſt formed, and how the

Laws

Laws of Motion were firſt eſtabliſhed, and transferred according to his determined Rules. And when we conſider thoſe Elaborate Specimens of God's Wiſdom, the Seeds or Eggs of Living Creatures, *&c.* the Ingenuous confeſs, and the Confident betray, their Ignorance. We may indeed know our ſelves better than what is without us; yet in that we are very deficient. Witneſs the Diſputes of Philoſophers about a Human Soul, and of Phyſitians and Anatomiſts about the Fabrick and Theory of a Human Body; but our Knowledg is much more deficient in the Conditions of the Union of Soul and Body, which though unknown to Philoſophers is not ſo to him that made and preſerves us.

Other advantages of Divine Underſtanding.

But there are ſeveral other Advantages of Divine above Human Knowledg: for Men can give Attention to but few things at once,

Pluribus intentus, minor eſt, ad ſingula Senſus,

and it was admired by the Antients, that a Man could dictate to two or three Secretaries at once. But God's Knowledg extends to all he hath made at once, *There is no Creature that is not manifeſt in his ſight, but all things are naked and* τετραχηλισμένα *extraverted to his Eyes, Heb.* 4.13. For God ſees not only all his Works, but what all his Creatures do or think. Beſides, the Knowledg of God is not Progreſſive or Diſcourſive, like ours, acquired by Reaſoning, but an intuitive Knowledg; for though we have ſuch limited Underſtandings that we are forced to acquire the Knowledg of one thing by another more known; yet God knows every

thing by it ſelf and equally; and by looking into himſelf, as in a Divine Looking Glaſs, ſees every thing diſtinctly and at once. And further, God knows not only our Thoughts but Intentions, being Styled καρδιογνώστης, 1 *Chron.* 28. 9. *and the Searcher of all Hearts, that underſtandeth all the Imaginations of the Thoughts*, *Pſal.* 139. 2. Nay he knows our Thoughts afar off, before they are vented, *ſo that if our Hearts condemn us, God is greater that our Hearts and knows all things*, 1 *John* 3. 20. Thus God by *Daniel* declared the Series of the Prophetick Dream to *Nebuchadnezzar*, when that Monarch had forgot it. And we may obſerve even in a Man's ſelf where the moſt vivid Impreſſions are made, that God's Knowledg may ſurpaſs his, for *St. Paul* being caught into Paradice ſays, *whether in the Body I cannot tell, or whether out of the Body I cannot tell*; but to both he adds, *God knows*. Our Knowledg not only of our ſelves, but of other Creatures is ſo defective, that it is a great Confidence of ſome, to pretend to know God fully, by the Light of Reaſon; and we may Reaſonably ask, *how imperfect muſt mere Philoſophers Knowledg of Gods Nature be, ſince they know him but by his Works, and know his Works themſelves but very imperfectly!* Another Prerogative of Divine Knowledg is the Preſcience of Future Accidents, depending on the Determinations and Actions of free Agents; which the greateſt Wits have in vain endeavoured, to know, or how God can; and therefore deny that God can, tho' it be proved by recorded Predictions in Scripture.

If

If then I conſider the Excellency of Gop's Prerogatives, I cannot but wonder as well as be concerned, that Rational Men who are Chriſtians, ſhould wilfully and contemptuouſly neglect thoſe Notices which might increaſe their Knowledg of God, and conſequently that Veneration that is due to him; it contributing both to Men's Happineſs and Duty, to ſeek after the Knowledg of God that they might adore him. God who hath endowed Men with an innate deſire of Knowledg, and a Power to diſtinguiſh and chuſe the beſt Informations of his Excellency; and hath made it his Duty to ſearch after God and Love him, did this, that Men might find him the worthieſt Object of their Underſtanding, as well as Wonder and Veneration. Nor can any thing more become a Rational Creature, than to contemplate the Divine Author of his Reaſon, the Nobleſt Object it can be employed about. A Dead Language, a ruſty Medal, or the Cuſtoms and Opinions of a Nation no better than our ſelves, are eſteemed Pieces of Curioſity, and the ſtudy of Corporeal things obtains the Title of Philoſophers, to thoſe that purſue them; but the greateſt diſcoveries we can make of them, are inconſiderable in reſpect of the Excellency of the Knowledg of God, which as much exceeds that of his Works, as he is more Excellent than them. And it is his undoubted Prerogative, to be infinitely above his Works, whether thoſe of Nature or Art; the former being more immediately his, and the later produced by the Intervention of Man. And though God hath imprinted on his Corporeal Works, the Marks

The Study and Knowledg of God's excellences above other Acquirements.

of his Wiſdom, Power and Goodneſs, worthy the Admiration of the greateſt Philoſophers, yet he is ſo far above his Works, that he not only might, but may if he pleaſes, make Creatures incomparably more perfect than he hath; yet his Prerogative will ſtill be Superior to what he hath made, his Creatures being neither ſelf-exiſtent nor Independent. It muſt then be very ſtrange, that Men ſhould think much of ſpending a few hours in Contemplating and Worſhiping that moſt Glorious and Perfect Being, who is continually adored by the Angels themſelves, who are celebrating continually the Nativity of the World with Songs and Acclamations of Joy; and they ought ardently to ſeek after a further Knowledg of God, ſince they, as the Apoſtle tells us, earneſtly ſearch after the Truths of the Goſpel, and the Diſpenſations of the Almighty towards frail Mortal Men.

How far we may be allowed to enquire into the Nature of God.

But perhaps it may be ſaid, that it is dangerous to enquire after the Nature of God, but the ſecret things which are left to God: are his unrevealed Purpoſes and Decrees, and his moſt abſtruſe Eſſence, the ſearch of which is not our buſineſs; but there is a great difference betwixt a ſaucy Curioſity, and a humble Deſire of Knowledg to improve our Reverence and Devotion towards him. And as it is Arrogance to pretend to comprehend Divine Perfections, ſo it is excuſable and laudable to purſue ſuch Enquiries as may render them more worthy our Admiration, and Lovely in our Eyes. We are exhorted to *Grow in Grace*, 2. *Pet.* 3. 18. and *the Knowledg of Chriſt*, and to *add to our Vertue Knowledg*,

ledg, 2 *Pet.* 1. 5. And when *Moſes* asked the Bleſſing of a more particular View of God, though his requeſt was partly refuſed, *Exod.* 33. 18. becauſe not ſuitable with his Mortal State, and perhaps might have been fatal to him; yet God returned ſo gratious an Anſwer as ſhewed he was not diſpleaſed with his requeſt; ſuch a Glorious View being afforded him as no Action or Suffering could obtain, *Exod.* 34. 5, 6, *&c.* And that we may acquire ſo much Knowledg of Supernatural Objects, that we cannot have adequate *Ideas* of what we know, is evident, from *St. Paul*, *Epheſ.* 3. 18. who prays, that thoſe Chriſtians may comprehend both the Length, Breadth, Depth and Height, and to know the Love of Chriſt which paſſeth Knowledg. If then it be Lawful to contemplate God without pretending to pry into his Decrees and Purpoſes, or to be poſitive in our Aſſertions about his Nature and Attributes, only to raiſe in our ſelves juſt Sentiments of Perfections, that devout Contemplation of God, not to mention the Luminous Influence and Aſſiduous Converſe with God, hath on Men's Minds, as in *Moſes* in the Mount, *Exod.* 24. 29, 30. *&c.* and on their Graces and Vertues, ſeems to be the moſt delightful Exerciſe the Soul can enjoy on this ſide Heaven; for as Admiration is the moſt pleaſing affection of the Mind, and diſpoſſeſſes it of all other Objects, as in Masks and other Pompous Spectacles, and as when *St. Peter* was raviſhed with the Glorious Transfigurations of our Saviour upon Mount *Tabor*, he cryed out, it was good for them to be there, and talked of building Tabernacles for thoſe

who had Manſions in Heaven, being ſo raviſhed with the ſight, that he cryed out, *he knew not what he ſaid, Luk.* 9. 29. Now as the Pleaſure of Admiration is proportionable to the Nature and Circumſtances of the thing admired, none can afford ſo much Satisfaction, as that which hath God for it's Object, the moſt Excellent Object of all Beings. For the Admiration, the Contemplation of God affords one that is attentive and humble; hath two Advantages, above what can be in his Works or any of our own. For when we admire the moſt Noble and Pretious Corporeal Bodies, as Stars, Gems, *&c.* our Satisfaction is allayed with a Secret reproach grounded on that Wonder; ſince it ſhews a great Imperfection in our Underſtanding to be ſo much ſtruck with wonder about Creatures ſo much Inferior in Nature to our ſelves; whereas it is no Reflection on a finite human Intellect to be Amazed and Aſtoniſhed, contemplating ſo Glorious and Infinitely a perfect Being, which a Created Intellect cannot comprehend. And we may further conſider, that we have much more Reaſon to admire God above other Objects, ſince they are of a limited Nature, and admired but for ſome particular thing, which when we are familiarly acquainted with them, gradually decline, and at laſt ceaſe. But the Perfections of God Almighty are ſo immenſe, that the more Knowledg we have of him, the more Reaſon we have to admire him; ſo that there are perpetual Opportunities of improving our Knowledg, and earneſt Deſires of new Ones. Since we aſcribe but one Name to him, we may think him but one

one Object of Speculation; but though he is but one in Eſſence, his Immenſity is ſo great, that as an Object, he is infinitely various; as Heaven hath but one Name; yet a great many Stars and Planets, which afford a great Variety of Motions, and ſo many *Phænomena*, which after the Curioſity of a great many Ages, admit of as many Improvements as the Knowledg of the Antients amount to; and as ſeveral fixed Stars have been diſcovered by the Uſe of Optick Glaſſes, and other Stars formerly unknown, ſo beyond the Line whole Conſtellations have been diſcovered in the Southern Hemiſphere, ſo that new Objects of Admiration appear, after ſo many Thouſand Years Curioſity; and no doubt but Poſterity will ſtill make further Diſcoveries both of Conſtellations and Stars in them; we need not therefore fear that our Admiration of ſo great a Subject will ceaſe for want of Objects to continue it. The Excellency of God is like the Notion *Ariſtotle* gives of Infinity, that take never ſo much from it, there ſtill remains more. And ſhould we make never ſo many Diſcoveries of the Wonders of the Divine Nature, Attributes and Diſpenſations, they are ſtill worthy our Admiration. And as in an Infinite Series of aſcending Numbers, though by a Progreſſion the Number will ſtill increaſe, yet the Progreſſion may be ſtill continued without coming near to an Infinite Number.

The Duty we owe our Maker diſadvantagious to them that neglect it.

From what we have ſaid of the Advantages of admiring of God, and the Delight in contemplating him, it will appear, that they are much to blame both in reſpect of themſelves and their Maker, who employ not their Thoughts in

in ſo Pleaſant and Noble a Speculation, and Veneration for him that made them; ſo that Reaſon ſeems to be a much greater Bleſſing to other Men than to Atheiſts, who cannot employ it about God, but with Infidelity and Terror. So *Plato* was much more happy than *Epicurus*, the former being entertained with Contemplation of a Deity, whereas the later had not the Felicity of ſuch a Rational and Delightful Admiration.

The Intent of our Knowledg of God and it's reſult.

And now, though ſo delightful and pure as well as Spiritual a Pleaſure may well attract and elevate our Thoughts to ſo Glorious and Amiable an Object; yet it ought to be both the Intent and Reſult of our Admiration of God, to raiſe more worthy *Ideas*, and more Honourable and Reverend Thoughts of a Being ſo wonderful and beyond a Parallel, whom the more we apprehend, the more we find him Superior to his Works; eſpecially our ſelves; who are not of the Higheſt Order, but mere Men; and no more Noble, than as capable and permitted to know, admire and adore God. Which he that eſteems a ſlight and regardleſs Employment, would be unqualified to find Happineſs even in Heaven, though admitted there. The Natural Reſult of a more intimate View of Infinite Excellency, is a deep Senſe of our own Diſparity, and the great Veneration and Fear that is due to that Glorious and Fearful Name of *the Lord our God*, *Deut.* 28. 58. And when God declared his Divine Greatneſs out of the Whirl-Wind to *Job*, he ſoon changed his Style and confeſſed, that he had *uttered what he underſtood not, things too wonderful for him which he knew not*, *Job* 42.

3,

3, 4, 5, 6. and imploring Inſtruction from God, he acknowledges, that the Knowledg of God, gives a Man more humble Thoughts of himſelf, *I have heard of thee, by the hearing of the Ear; but now mine Eye ſeeth thee, wherefore I abhor my ſelf and repent in Duſt and Aſhes.*

The Occaſion and Intent of our Diſcourſe.

But perhaps this Excurſion may be thought too long, but this will be eaſily excuſed, if we may be ſuppoſed in *Davids* caſe, who ſays, *my Heart was hot within me, while I was muſing the fire burned,* as he ſaid, *then ſpake I with my Tongue, Pſal* 39. 3. Thus by the largeneſs of our Diſcourſe on ſo Noble a Subject, we hope to excite, at leaſt in our ſelves, ſo juſt an admiration of God, as may be our *Reaſonable Service* or *Worſhip, Rom.* 12. 2. God hath declared, *that he that offers Praiſe, glorifyes him, Pſal.* 50. 25. and our Devotions are ſtyled, *Sacrifices of Praiſe, Heb.* 13. 15. and if the *Calves of our Lips* are encouraged, how acceptable will our Mental Offerings be; having high and honourable Thoughts of him, and humble ones of our ſelves in the preſence of his Excellency; ſuch reverence and devout fear, *Heb.* 12. 28. being a way of *adoring God in Spirit and in Truth, Joh.* 16. 13. Whoever is thus employed, may compare his Condition with that of *Zacharias, his lot being to burn Incenſe,* and offer the Pureſt and Nobleſt Legal Sacrifices to God Almighty. And I think my Time well Employed, if I can contribute to raiſe a juſt Admiration and Veneration for God, which can never be great enough; ſince the more we know and adore his infinite Excellency, the greater influence, and more advantage

vantage we receive by it, as God is introduced saying, *because he hath ſet his Love upon me; therefore will I deliver him, I will ſet him on high, becauſe he hath known my Name.*

Why Men want a due Veneration of God.

We are ſo little inclined to cheriſh an awful Veneration for God, either for want of Thought, or through Vice, Prejudices, and the Sublimity of the Subject, which require a ſtudious Contemplation to diſcover his adorable Attributes, that it requires both a great many arguments, as well as frequent inculcations, to imprint them upon Men's Minds, before they will be brought to an Exerciſe they are unacquainted with, or not willing to be ſo.

The Inferiority of Man's Intellect to God's, further Conſidered.

But to proceed to the Intent of this Diſcourſe, which was to ſhew the immenſe Inferiority of Man's Intellect to God's, it would be too tedious to inſiſt on all the Arguments that might be offered; we ſhall only add, that *Human Reaſon* in reſpect of *God's Intellect* is like the *Moon* in reſpect of the *Sun*, the former being not only much ſmaller, but ſhining with a borrowed Light, having her *Wane* as well as *Full*, and is often Eclipſed, and blemiſhed with dark Spots; ſo Human Reaſon is but ſmall and dull, in reſpect of that *Fountain* as well as *Father of Light*, *Pſalm* 36. 9. *Jam.* 1. 17. and *in whoſe Light, we ſee Light*, *Pſalm* 36. 9. and as Human is only a borrowed Light, ſo it's increaſe is impaired, and often darkned with Luſts and Paſſions, or a ſuſpenſion of the Influence of God Almighty's Beams; and at the beſt is blemiſhed with Imperfections; being incapable of an entire and uniform Illumination. Therefore we ought to be very circumſpect, when we make Philoſophical

phical Enquiries, or Diſpute about God, eſpecially when we deſign to praiſe him; for when we ſpeak of God, we ought to ſay what is worthy of God, as well as true. Our *Ideas*, however ſo great, will rather expreſs the greatneſs of our Veneration, than the immenſity of his Perfections; and the Notions worthy the moſt Intelligent Men, are far ſhort of being worthy the Incomprehenſible God, the brighteſt *Idea* we can frame of God being infinitely Inferior, and no more than a *Parhelion* in reſpect of the Sun; for though that Meteor is ſplendid and reſembles the Sun, yet it reſides in a Cloud, and is not only much beneath the Sun in diſtance, but inferior in bigneſs and ſplendour. He therefore hath the trueſt Veneration for God, who repreſents his Excellences and Prerogatives in the moſt Nobleſt Expreſſions, and through a ſenſe of his own Inferiority, hath the beſt *Ideas* of the Perfections of his Maker. And if our Hymns and Praiſes of that Supreme Being deſerve our Bluſhes, and ſtand in need of his Pardon; their Faces will one Day be covered with ſtrange Confuſion, who not only ſpeak ſlightly and confuſedly, but contemptuouſly and drollingly of that infinitely perfect and ſupreme Being, who impiouſly and ungratefully miſemploy thoſe Faculties and Wit he beſtowed upon them for better Purpoſes. And indeed, if his Goodneſs were not infinite, his Tranſcendent Excellences, are ſo great as to diſcourage us from pretending to celebrate them.

We ſhall not therefore pretend to write a Panegyrick of God, of whom we may eaſily ſay too much, though not enough; being content with

with a humble Adoration of thoſe Perfections, whoſe Praiſes will expreſs our own Weakneſs, rather than repreſent his Excellences; ſince the higheſt Expreſſions come ſhort in expreſſing that ineffable Object; as the higheſt Number we can think of, may be multiplyed by ſome other Number, and be but the Root of a ſquare or cubical Number; ſo that any determinate conception of God's immenſity, muſt come ſhort of it, as it is a limited and determinated Conception.

The Concluſion.

What we have ſaid may be ſufficient to ſhew, *the high Veneration our Intellects owe to God*, ſince he may have other Attributes and Perfections we know not of; and ſince we have but a dim and ſhallow Knowledg of thoſe Attributes of his, *viz.* his Wiſdom and Power, and may diſcern, that there is an unbounded Extent of Perfection, beyond our abilities to perceive; and therefore ſuch imperfect Creatures ought not to talk haſtily and confidently of God, conſidering our ineſtimable Inferiority to ſuch a Being; and therefore our Ignorance ought to teach us Devotion, that Ignorance proceeding from the Number and Incomprehenſibleneſs of his Excellences; ſo that our Knowledg only helps us the more to admire his Perfections. Therefore it muſt be the higheſt Preſumption to talk of God's Knowledg, as if we were able to look thro' and meaſure it; whereas we ought, when we mention his Attributes to be aware leſt we miſrepreſent them; and not to entertain a fond Opinion of our ſufficiency, the Notions we have of God being rather ſuited to our limited Faculties,

culties, than equal to his boundleſs Perfections.

Thoſe Intellectual Beings, the Angels, tho' their Minds are illuminated with extenſive Knowledg, are *deſirous to pry into the Myſteries of the Goſpel*; whence it appears, they are far from prying into the *Depths of God*, or from comprehending his Nature. And thus in the Majeſtick Viſion before *Iſaiah*, *Iſa.* 6. they are repreſented as Attendants about God's Throne, *covering their Faces with their Wings*, as not able to behold the dazling Brightneſs of his Majeſty. How then ſhould we Mortals, infinitely beneath him, degenerated by Sin, and the Imperfections of our inferior Nature, talk irreverently of the Divine Eſſence and Perfections, not regarding the immenſe Difference betwixt God and Us, being unable to ſearch into his adorable Nature. We had much better with the *Pſalmiſt* confeſs, *ſuch Knowledg is too wonderful for me, it is high, I cannot attain unto it*, and celebrate that God, whoſe *Glorious Name is exalted above all Bleſſing and Praiſe*, *Nehem.* 9.

CHAP. VII.

Containing a Diſcourſe of things above Reaſon, enquiring whether a Philoſopher ſhould admit there are any ſuch.

THe Subject of our preſent Enquiry being, whether and if at all, how far we may Reaſon about things that are ſaid to be above Reaſon, *What is meant by things above Reaſon*

Reaſon, as ſome of the Principles of the Chriſtian Religion are, we ſhall firſt obſerve, that if by things above Reaſon, thoſe are meant, that cannot be diſcovered without Revelation, there are ſeveral, as the free Decrees of God, and his Determinations concerning the Government of the World, and a future State, which no Human Reaſon can pry into, being only to be diſcovered by Revelation. But if by things above Reaſon ſuch things are meant, as when delivered in Words without Darkneſs and Ambiguity, cannot be conceived by our Rational Faculty, this Subject will require our further conſideration.

Three ſorts of things above Reaſon.

And *Firſt*, We ought to conſider, whether what we talk of, be Chymerical or not, and whether there are ſuch things as we cannot comprehend, though expreſſed in ſuch Words as would render other things Intelligible; we ought alſo to conſider, how we are to know what things are to be eſteemed above Reaſon, and how far we may diſcourſe of them; or whether any ſupernatural revealed Propoſitions, ſuch as Articles of Faith ought to be eſteemed ſuch. For it ſeems, that amongſt the Objects our Reaſon may contemplate, there are ſome whoſe Nature we cannot comprehend; and ſome whoſe Attributes and Actions we cannot underſtand how they ſhould belong to the Subject; or we are not able to conceive how they are conſiſtent with ſome known Truth; ſo that there ſeems to be three ſorts of things above Reaſon. By things above Reaſon, we mean ſuch as the Intellect may aſſent to, yet when it converſes about them, it finds a peculiar diſadvantage; either according

according to the Nature of the thing propoſed, which either cannot be ſufficiently comprehended, or we cannot apprehend the manner of it's Exiſting and Effects; or it contains ſome Notion or Propoſition which we cannot reconcile with ſome other, which we know to be true. The firſt of theſe may be called Incomprehenſible, the ſecond Inexplicable, and the third Unſociable.

The Firſt Sort of Things above Reaſon.

But to explain theſe Terms more fully: the firſt conſiſts of thoſe things we have not diſtinct adequate and comprehenſive *Ideas* of. Of which kind are all Intellectual Beings, which are of an higher Order than Human Souls, as Angels; but more eſpecially, the Author of things both Corporeal and Incorporeal, whoſe Perfections are ſo Infinite, and his Nature ſo Singular, that it is impoſſible finite Creatures ſhould comprehend them: we may indeed, by his Works and our ſelves, being part of them, know *what he is*, and partly *what he is not*, but none but his own Intellect can tell *what he is* perfectly; ſo that in other Terms we may call this Object *ſupra Intellectual*.

The Second Sort.

The ſecond conſiſts of ſuch things, which tho' we cannot deny their *Exiſtence*, yet we cannot clearly apprehend how they *do exiſt*, or *can be*, what we acknowledg them to be; as how Matter can be *infinitely* or *indefinitely Diviſible*; or how incommenſurableneſs ſhould be betwixt the ſide and the diagonal of a Square, that neither one nor the other can be adequately meaſured. That Matter is diviſible *ad infinitum*, is both *Ariſtotle's* and the Opinion of the Geometricians, and is further demonſtrable by the ſide and diagonal

agonal of a Square, which is grounded on a demonſtration in *Euclid*, yet if continued Quantity be not diviſible without an End, why may not a determinate part of the ſide of a Square be found, which frequently repeated, may meaſure the Diagonal exactly too. But though we are aſſured by Mathematical Demonſtrations of the Truth of this, yet none can conceive how it is poſſible, a line not a quarter of a Yard in length, ſhould be diviſible, without an End of ſubdiviſions; or how amongſt ſo many aliquot Parts, that may be made of the ſide of a Square none of thoſe can be found, that may exactly meaſure a Diagonal.

The Third ſort. The third ſort of things, that ſeem to be above our Reaſon, are thoſe which to our Underſtandings agree not with the Rules, Axioms and Notions, by which we judge of Truth and Falſehood; containing ſuch difficulties as cannot be removed according to the Rules of ſubordinate Sciences, and the common way of Reaſoning, ſomething belonging to them being irreconcileable with manifeſt Truths. To make this out, we ſhall offer the following Moral Inſtance. *A Moral Inſtance.* And *Firſt*, It is generally agreed that Man is endowed with a free Will, all Laws againſt Murther, Adultery and Theft, ſuppoſing that Man hath a Power to forbear committing of them; the ſenſe of which is ſufficient to make Malefactors acknowledg their Puniſhments juſt, their Conſciences condemning them, as well as their Judges. And yet the greateſt part of Mankind aſcribe to God a Preſcience of Human Actions, which is grounded on their Belief of Propheſies, and their recourſe to Oracles; one of which

which ways Men have expected to have a Knowledg of future Events, depending on the Actions of Men; but how Accidental things, which depend on the free Will of Men can be fore known, we cannot comprehend; nor is it a leſs difficulty to conceive, how a Being infinitely perfect, ſhould want preſcience; or that their Will ſhould want that Liberty Men almoſt always find, they have the Liberty to exerciſe. Another Inſtance we ſhall offer on this occaſion is Geometrical; for as they teach, that Quantity is diviſible *ad Infinitum*, ſuppoſe a Line of three Foot long be divided into two Parts, one double to the other; Then ſuppoſe the Line of two Foot be diviſible into infinite Parts or otherwiſe; If you deny it, the Rules of Geometry are falſe; if it be poſſible, then the Line of one Foot is diviſible into as many Parts as the Line of two, though one is as much again as the other; or elſe the Infinite Parts into which the Line of one Foot is diviſible, muſt be leſs in Number than thoſe into which the Line of two Foot is divided, and the Line of two Foot muſt have Parts much greater than Infinite. Which ſhews, that we muſt either reject Inferences drawn from evident Truths, or concede with abſurd Concluſions, it all the Common Rules by which we judge of other things may be applyed to Infinites. But here we would have it obſerved, that though the Difficulty of the Subject, hath inclined us, the better to illuſtrate it, to divide Things above Reaſon into three Sorts; yet we ſhall not here treat of them ſeverally. And though we have obſerved, that a Propoſition

A Geometrical Inſtance.

may relate to ſomething *Supra-Intellectual*, or ſomething which we apprehend not how it can be true, or teach ſomething for a Truth, that cannot be reconciled with ſomething we allow to be true; yet if true Inſtances of any of theſe be brought, it will be ſufficient for our purpoſe, to ſhew in General, *That there may be things that ſurpaſs Reaſon*, or at leaſt, that they are not to be judged of by the ordinary Rules; ſo that we ſhall commonly call them Priviledged Things.

An Objection propoſed.

But perhaps here a difficulty may be propoſed, in reſpect of what hath been offered; which is, that ſuppoſing a Circle be divided into three hundred and ſixty Degrees, and as many ſtreight Lines as you pleaſe to conceive, be drawn from the ſeveral deſignable Parts of the Degrees to the Centre; It is evident, that the Degrees being equal, as many Lines may be drawn from one as from the other. If then a Circular Arch equal to the Degree aſſumed, be bent into a ſmall Circle, having the ſame Centre with the great one, it followeth, that the Semidiameters of a Circle can only touch one another in the Centre; ſo that whatever Lines are drawn from the Circumference of the great Circle to the Centre, muſt paſs through the Circumference of the leſs Circle by different Points, otherwiſe they would touch one another, before they met at the Centre; and conſequently, whatever Lines are drawn from the greater Circumference, muſt divide the leſs into as many Parts. So that here a Curve Line that was not poſſibly to be divided into more than an Arch of one Degree or the 360*th.* Part of

of the great Circle, without being made longer, becomes diviſible into as many Parts as the Circumference of the great Circle; which will hold true, ſuppoſing the great Circle to be big enough to contain the Firmament, and the leſſer to be no bigger than an Inch.

But notwithſtanding this is a plauſible Propoſition, it ſeems not anſwered to invalidate the truth of what was propoſed, it ſeeming agreeable both to the Nature of God and Man; for Men flatter themſelves too much, to think their Capacities of ſuch extent, and unprepoſſeſt, as many Philoſophers think they are, ſince we are but Created and Finite Beings, being ſuch as it pleaſed the Author of Nature to make us; ſo that we may have congenite Notions, Appetites and Tendences of the Mind; as well as the Means we are furniſhed with to inquire into and Judg of Truth, being anſwerable to the deſigns of our Maker, whoſe purpoſe was not that we ſhould be capable of comprehending all manner of Truths; many of which are unneceſſary for us to know, and ſome chiefly deſigned to ſhew us our Imperfections, and make us deſirous of that place, where our Underſtandings ſhall be enlarged. But though God hath limited our Faculties, that ſome Objects ſhould be beyond the comprehenſion of our Intellects; yet we have Knowledg enough to diſcern, that we come ſhort of knowing them.

But though from what hath been ſaid, it may appear, what I mean by things above Reaſon, yet it is one thing to explain the Senſe of a Propoſition, and another to prove the Truth of it; yet amongſt the Examples we have propoſed,

ſome not only ſhew, what I mean by Things above Reaſon, but may alſo prove that there are ſuch things; yet the proving of that is to manifeſt our Ignorance, it being impoſſible to comprehend things we allow to be above the reach of our Reaſon, as much as it is to ſee things that are inviſible.

Infinite Underſtanding much exceeds our finite Capacities.

But it is no diſparagement to the Underſtanding or Reaſon to think it a limited Faculty, and that Finite is inferior to Infinite underſtanding; and if Reaſon makes uſe of it's Prerogative in the Exerciſe of diſcovered Truths, which is the Perfection of our Intellect, it is no diſparagement that Infinity exceeds it. A ſincere Underſtanding is to give or refuſe our Aſſent to Propoſitions as they are true or otherwiſe, without Impartially diſparaging the Judg. But to conſider the Argument it ſelf, and prove our Opinion by Experience, and to ſhew that that Experience is conſonant to Reaſon, we ſhall firſt proceed to alledg the Experience of ſeveral Wits, who have endeavoured to reconcile both the Grace of God and his Preſcience to Man's free Will, even in Moral Actions. And it appears not only from the Writings, but the Diſcourſe of many Speculative Metaphyſitians and Mathematicians, that after many fruſtrated endeavours, they have owned themſelves at a loſs in ſeveral points, not only in thoſe abſtruſe Subjects of the Nature of God and a Human Soul, but thoſe more obvious Bodies in the Corporeal World, and the leaſt Portions of them. And *Firſt*, whether a continued Quantity, having Length, Depth and Profundity, be made up of Indiviſibles, hath puzzled a great many

many Learned Diſputants, one of which I ſhall here mention, who thus expreſſes himſelf. *Aggredimur continus compoſitionem, cujus hujuſq; non ſuparata Difficultas omnium Doctorum male ingenia vexavit, neque ullus fuit qui illam non pene inſuperabilem agnoſcat. Hanc pleriq; terminorum obſcuritate, illorumque replicatis & implicatis diſtinctionibus, & ſubdiſtinctionibus obtenebrant ne aperte capiantur deſperantes, rem poſſe alio modo tractari, neque rationis lucem ſuſtinere, ſed neceſſario confeſſionis tenebris obtegendum, ne argumentorum evidentia delegatur.* And this further appears from the Difficulties each Party, in their Arguments, imputes to the Oppoſite Opinion. And indeed any one, that conſiders the Difficulties that ariſe about the Doctrin of Infinites, will be ſatisfyed of the Diſproportion of thoſe abſtruſe Subjects to his Reaſon. And though further Diſcoveries may render ſuch things clearer to the Light of Reaſon, yet they are otherwiſe, in reſpect of what yet appears; and though new diſcoveries may explain ſeveral more abſtruſe Myſteries of Nature; yet I am inclined to think they will be ſuch as are ignorant of, for want of a ſufficient Hiſtory of Nature; or where we are prepoſſeſſed with prejudices, or apply not due attention in our Speculations. But there is not the ſame hopes in all Metaphyſical Difficulties, where Matters of Fact or Subordinate Parts of Learning are not ſo much available. And no doubt, but there are ſome things in reſpect of that Being, we call God, which will ſtill remain Imcomprehenſible to Philoſophical Underſtandings; and thoſe Difficulties can ſcarce be overcome which are

not owing to Perſonal Infirmities, or imitable Faults, but depend upon the limited Nature of the Intellect. And to what we have ſaid we ſhall add, that as Men's Curioſity may help to remove ſome of thoſe Difficulties, which have as yet been not conquered by Philoſophers; ſo it may occaſion them to diſcover new Difficulties more above Human Underſtandings to account for, then what we have hitherto met with; for there are ſeveral things already which we think we know, becauſe we never tryed to frame ſuch *Ideas* as would be fit to acquieſce in. And this Intricacy we find in the Notions commonly received of Space, Time, Motion, *&c.* And alſo the Angle of Contact, the Doctrin of *Aſymptotes* and ſurd Numbers, and incommenſurable Lines, which concern not common Accomptants, ſo much puzzle Mathematicians, that though they can demonſtrate, that ſuch affections belong to them, they cannot tell how they do ſo; So that as Men's Curioſity may help them to the Solutions of ſome Difficulties, it may likwiſe raiſe others more inſuperable.

An Inſtance of the Rota Ariſtotelica.

And this Conjecture is not a little favoured by the *Rota Ariſtotelica*, which not only puzzl'd *Ariſtotle*, but ſeveral other School-Men and Mathematicians, there being ſome Circumſtances in the Motion and Rotation of the Wheel and it's Nave, or two Points aſſigned, one of which being in the former, and the other in the later, that have appeared difficult to be reconciled to granted Truths; ſo that the hopes of their Solution hath been quite left off; which Inſtance muſt be allowed to be a very good one, if no better an Account can be given of it, than what

is

is uſually by the Schools, or thoſe who either confeſs them inſoluble, or make leſs pretenſions to account for them, ſuppoſing things either not to be proved, or as the Doctrin of Rarefaction and Condenſation, not underſtood, or loſe the Queſtion by running into thoſe Diſputes of thoſe obſcure Controverſies *de compoſitione continui.*

Our Opinion prov'd agreeable to Reaſon.

But not to urge further, an Argument drawn from Experience, we ſhall proceed to another, by ſhewing our Opinion agreeable to Reaſon But not to examin, whether all that have as yet appeared above Reaſon, be inconceivable, through an Eſſential Weakneſs of our Underſtandings, being imperfect and of a limited Nature, or ſome Impediments proceeding from the Condition of the Soul in this Life, and it's State of Union with a Groſs Mortal Body, to clear the way to thoſe that are to follow, we ſhall obſerve, that whatever may be thought of the Faculties *in abſtracto*. Reaſon acts according to certain Notions and *Ideas* and Axioms or Propoſitions, by which as by Rules it both conceives and makes Eſtimates and Judgments of Things, ſo that when we ſay, things are conſonant to, or diſagreeable to, Reaſon, we mean, that they are immediately or mediately deducible from, conſiſtent with, or contradictory to, ſome Standing Rule or Notions. And if theſe Rules or Notions be ſuch, as are either abſtracted from finite Things, or are only agreeable to them; they may be either Uſeleſs or deceive Us, when we ſtretch them ſo far as to apply them to the Infinite God, or ſuch as involve Infinite Multitude, Magnitude or Litleneſs. To confirm which

Notion we ſhall repreſent, that all the things that we do or can know, may be divided into two kinds; either ſuch as may be known without a Medium, or ſuch as we cannot conceive without the Intervention of a Medium, or a diſcourſive Act. Of the firſt kind are ſuch Notions as are *Connate*, or may be called *innate*, as two Contradictories cannot be both true together; that the whole of any thing is greater than any Part; that every entire Number is either even or odd, & ſuch Truths as are upon their account agreed to without any Medium to prove them, becauſe as ſoon as they are clearly conceived by the Underſtanding, by plain Expreſſions or apt Examples, they demonſtrate themſelves, without any intervening Propoſition, ſo as to gain the aſſent of the Intellect, as ſome Axioms of *Euclid*, as *If to equal things, equal things be added, the totals will be equal*; *and two right Lines cannot include a Space.* Of the Second kind are ſuch things as we gain the Knowledg of by Reaſon, as when by intervening Propoſitions, we draw Concluſions negatively or affirmatively of any thing. As ſuppoſing, as we are conſcious of our own Infirmities, that we are not the Authors of our own Natures, all the Experience and Knowledg we have, inclines us to think it true, that the Meaſures ſuggeſted us by Senſations, the reſult of Senſible Obſervations, or other Inſtruments of Knowledg, extend only to Finite Things, or Beings; and therefore are not applicable to others, and ſeveral of thoſe Principles we eſteem general, are not abſolute and univerſal, but only limited and reſpective Notions of Truth. And though perfect Syllogiſms are eſteemed the moſt regular Forms of Reaſoning,

Reaſoning; yet the Laws of theſe are grounded on the Doctrin of Proportions; for as betwixt things equal there may be a Proportion of equality, Mathematical Rules may be ſuppoſed to be Publickly propoſed upon the grand Syllogiſtical Rules. Geometricians will tell you, that Finite and Infinite Lines have no Proportion, becauſe the former never ſo often repeated, cannot exceed the later, which it ought to do according to *Euclids* Definition of Proportion, *Rationem habere inter ſe quantitates dicuntur, quæ poſſunt multiplicatæ ſeſe mutuo ſuperare. Defenit.* 5. *Elem. V. Euclidis.* Which may influence us to believe, that ſince the Underſtanding makes uſe of the Notions and Truths it is furniſhed with in it's Actions, by thoſe Inſtruments of Proportion it Eſtimates and Judges of other things; which Inſtruments may be yet Diſproportionate to Objects which are to be employed in determining ſeveral reſpective Particulars in relation to them. So the Underſtanding employing the Eye as an Inſtrument to judge of Diſtances, we cannot eſtimate the Breadth of the Ocean, ſince our ſight cannot diſcover the Extent of ſo vaſt an Object. And thoſe Inſtruments which Surveyors uſe to meaſure the height of a Mountain or Steeple, will not enable them to take the diſtance of the Moon. But when Aſtronomers take a Chain, long enough to reach the Centre of the Earth, though this and the Parallaxes, may help them to meaſure tolerably the Diſtance of ſome of the nearer Planets, and eſpecially of the Moon; yet the ſame Method will not enable them to meaſure the Diſtance of the fixed Stars; the

theSemidiameter of theEarth bearing noProportion to the greatSphere of theFirmament, whoſe Diſtance makes theParalaxes vaniſh; it being at ſo great a diſtance, the ſame thing, whether aStar be obſerved from the Centre or Surface of theEarth. And though it be not ſo eaſy to illuſtrate ſuch abſtruſe Subjects as ſurpaſs our Reaſon, by appoſite Examples, yet the Imagination, which is akin to the Intellect, may afford us ſome aſſiſtances; for when I think of a Triangle or Square, it gives me an intuitive *Idea* of thoſe figures, as if a figure of three ſides and four equal ſides and angles were placed before me; but a *Myriagon* conſiſting of ten Thouſand equal Sides and Angles, my Imagination would be puzzled with ſo great a Multitude, and form but a confuſed *Idea* of a *Polygon* with a great many ſides; and if a Man ſhould endeavour to frame *Ideas* of a *Myriagon* and *Chyliagon*, they would be both ſo confuſed, that his Imagination would not diſtinguiſh them, though one hath ten times as many ſides as the other. And if you ſhould imagin an Atom, ten thouſand of which would ſcarce make up one of thoſe particles of Duſt, apparent in the Sun Beams, when ſhot into a darkned place, the *Idea* of ſo ſmall a thing could not be repreſented to our Imagination, not having fallen under our Senſes. So when we mention God's Primary Attributes, as his Omnipotence, and other Perfections, the Conceptions we have of the things we ſpeak of are very inadequate. And though ſeveral Propoſitions which relate to things above Reaſon, may ſeem clear enough to ordinary Wits, yet if examined with Curioſity, Skill and Attention, their

their Parts will either ſeem inconſiſtent with one another, or they contain contradictions to ſome acknowledged or manifeſt Truths, or they are ſo obſcure, that they cannot be explained. Thus when you propoſe the ſide and diagonal of a Square, we have clear and diſtinct *Ideas* of each of them apart, and when compared, we may conceive their incommenſurability; but if we throughly conſider this Negative Notion, and purſue it as we ought, it gives us the *Idea* of a ſtreight Line diviſible *ad infinitum*, and that diviſibility is clouded with ſo many difficulties, and is ſo irreconcileable to the confeſſed Dictates of Reaſon, that both Philoſophers and Geometricians though convinced of the Truth, cannot extricate themſelves out of the Difficulties.

And not to mention the inſuperable Difficulties about the Doctrin of Eternity, as uſually propoſed by Divines and Philoſophers, which may be preſumed to ariſe from the bold aſſumptions, and groundleſs ſubtleties of the School-men, rather than from the Nature of the thing it ſelf; we ſhall propoſe ſomething that is undenyable, as that ſome Subſtance, whether *God*, or as the *Peripateticks* ſay, the *World*, or as the *Epicureans* ſay, *Matter*, hath been for ever. But when we ſpeak of Eternity *à parte ante*, we have a Conception of it, yet that general Notion is ſuch, that when we attentively conſider it, as we do other things, the Intellect is *nonplus'd*; for the time which hath paſſed ſince *Adam*, hath no more proportion to the Duration of God, or Matter, than the time we mention what we ſay, and according to *Ariſtotle*, we may ſay the ſame of the

the Men that lived ten thouſands of Millions of Years before *Adam*; for each of theſe times being finite, and to be meaſured by a determinate Number of Years, they can have no proportion to an infinite Number of Years, which had no Beginning. And as there are ſome things, the Conſequences, as well as Nature of which, puzzle our Faculties; ſo others, tho' we have a Notion of them, yet their *Modus Operandi* is beyond our Comprehenſion, nay not only their true *Modus*, but that which even ſeems Intelligible. As though ſeveral Learned Men, upon a Philoſophical Account, aſſert, that God Created the World, yet we cannot conceive how a Subſtance could be made out of Nothing; and though all Philoſophers believe God to be the Maker of the World of pre-exiſtent Matter, yet how it could be made without a Local Motion of the Parts, and how an Incorporeal Subſtance can move a Body, which it may without reſiſtance paſs through, will hardly be explained; for if it be ſaid, that an Immaterial Subſtance can move the Limbs of an Organized Body, it may be anſwered, that it does not appear, that the Rational Soul does move any Parts of a Human Body, but only guides and regulates, what are already found there.

A Queſtion propo'ſd. But then, may it not be rationally ſaid, that by obſerving the proper Objects of our Faculties, and drawing regular deductions from theſe Obſervations, and from other innate or acquired Knowledg, we may conclude, that ſome things are, and thus have obſcure *Ideas* of them, tho' we cannot tell how they can be ſuch, or how they produce their Effects, denying not the

Truth

Truth and Sufficiency of other things we believe. To be brief, we may have Negative apprehenſions of ſome priviledged things; and poſitive, though not diſtinct apprehenſions of others, which may make us underſtand our ſelves, when we talk of them, though when we further conſider what we ſay, it appears our Words are not attended with clear anddiſtinctConceptions of the abſtruſe things we ſpeak of. And ſince it appears from Experience, that we cannot clearly apprehend things, which by clear and uſual Conſequences may be proved to be; it ought to paſs for a ſtrong Argument, that we have Conceptions of ſome things, where ſomething is contained that is above Reaſon and our Comprehenſion; ſo that Logick ſeems to tell us, that the Objection propoſed ſeems to deſtroy the Opinion; for when we talk of what is incomprehenſible, that Term muſt carry along with it a ſuitable *Idea* or not: If not, then it is a queſtion, whether that form of ſpeaking be proper; if it be, then we may have ſome kind of *Idea* of what is incomprehenſible. And when by Natural Theology we are taught, that God is an Infinitely perfect Being, we ought not to ſay, that ſuch had no *Idea* of ſuch a Being, becauſe that *Idea* was inadequate. And ſince *Ariſtotle* diſcourſes fully *de Infinito*, and cites the Antients for having done ſo before him; and ſince *Democritus*, *Epicurus* and *Gaſſendus*, and others, maintain the World to be without Bounds; or that Space in extent is not finite; or that the World conſiſts of an Infinite Number of Atoms; we can hardly think, that all theſe Perſons ſaid they knew not what, *de Infinito*,

Infinito, as we might conclude, if they had no *Idea* of what they ſaid; though ſuppoſing the Subject to be Infinite, their *Ideas* could not be comprehenſive and accurate. So that it cannot properly be ſaid, that we perceive not things above Reaſon properly, but only that we perceive that they are above Reaſon only; the Impreſſion upon the Underſtanding being dark and peculiar, whilſt we contemplate ſuch abſtruſe Objects; which obſcure Impreſſion, like an unuſual internal Senſation, lets the Underſtanding diſtinguiſh ſuch tranſcendent or priviledged things from others, and let it ſee the diſproportionate Power it hath to fathom ſuch Subjects, in reſpect of others; as the Eye can ſee but a little way into a deep Sea, all beyond that appearing dark and indiſtinct, which affects us ſo differently from what other Subjects do, that our ſight fails diſcovering the Bottom, and conſequently many things which remain there concealed.

That there are things above Reaſon further conſidered and proved.

But to ſhew further, that there are things above Reaſon, to what hath been ſaid of the two Arguments to ſhew that there are ſuch, we ſhall add, that ſince the firſt was ſuggeſted by Experience, and the other was taken from the Nature of Things and of Man; which was to illuſtrate and confirm the former, and therefore it may appear, that to acknowledg, that ſome things are above Reaſon, may be conſonant with the Dictates of it; yet the Concluſion may be ſufficiently evinced from the firſt Argument drawn from Experience; for if there are ſuch things, which Reaſon cannot comprehend, then it appears that our Faculties are inſufficient, and conſequently

conſequently ſome things are ſo ſublime and abſtruſe, that we not only are unable to comprehend them, but alſo upon what Account it is that we cannot comprehend them. And to countenance what hath been ſaid of gradual Notions, and to make it appear, that ſome Axioms and Rules eſteemed general, cannot be indifferently extended to all Subjects, we may conſider, what different Apprehenſions the Mind may frame of the ſame Object, both as the Underſtanding differs in Vigour, and as it is furniſhed with different Informations. For if the 117 Propoſition of *Euclid's* Tenth Book ſhould be propoſed to a Child, where he proves the ſide and a diagonal of a Square to be incommenſurable, though he may read the Words of the *Theorem*, and ſee the Scheme of Demonſtration, yet it would be impoſſible to make him underſtand it, it being above his Capacity; and tho' he ſhould live to be a grown Man, yet never have Learned Geometry, though he may know the meaning of Incommenſurable Lines, yet his additional Reaſon will indiſpoſe him to comprehend that Demonſtration, the Experience he hath had of Lines, making him ſuppoſe it as a general Truth, that by meaſuring two ſtreight Lines, we may find how much one exceeds the other in Length; and though one that underſtands all the preceding Propoſitions, will be able to evince, that thoſe two Lines are incommenſurable, yet why, of two ſhort Lines, each of which may be meaſured it ſelf, notwithſtanding the innumerable parts into which each may be divided into; none can exactly meaſure both, is what a Geometrician cannot readily

dily conceive, though he knows it to be true. So that hence it may appear, that the gradual difference of Intellectual Abilities in Children and Men, may eſſentially vary in different Ranks of Intellectual Beings, ſo that ſome Axioms which we think general, may when applyed to ſuch things as they are not proper meaſures for, occaſion Errors, though ſuch things may be no difficulties to greater Intellects.

An Objection of diſcerning inviſible things conſidered.

But ſince one part of an Objection about diſcerning inviſible things by the Eye, hath not been yet conſidered, we ſhall proceed to repreſent, that we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that God hath ſo framed the Nature of Man, as to furniſh his Intellective Faculty with a Light ſufficient to make eſtimates of a Multitude of things, and alſo to judge of his Nature and Power, and of it's utmoſt Limits of judging and defining. And as God being a free Agent, may have given the Mind of Man a limited Nature, furniſhed with ſo much Light, ſo the Queſtion may be, whether he hath done ſo? where we ſhall obſerve, that the Rational Soul does not only judge of things without her, but alſo about her, and what happens within her; ſhe contemplates her own Spirituality, as well as Union with the Body. The Intellect judges of it's own Nature, and whether it be a diſtinct Faculty from the Will; and as Logick and Metaphyſicks are the Works of Human Intellect, which, by forming thoſe Diſciplines, manifeſts, that it judges not only of Ratiocinations, but alſo of the Laws of Reaſoning, and teaches how to obtain both an Evidence and Certainty, and from what Mediums demonſtrative Arguments concerning

concerning any Subject are to be expected; ſo that if we compare the Eye, with the Underſtanding the Eye of the Mind, this difference muſt be allowed, that the Intellect does not only ſee other things as a Senſory, but it ſelf; and can diſcern it's own Blemiſhes and Deformities as well as Infirmities; which excuſes what the Excellent *Verulam* ſaid of the four Sorts of Idols, which miſguide the Study of Philoſophy, one of which he makes the *Idola Tribus*, meaning thoſe radicated Notions in the Nature of Mankind, which may confirm what we aſſerted, that the Soul is furniſhed with a Light by which ſhe can judge of thoſe Original Notions, by which ſhe is enabled to Judg of other Things; ſo that the Soul may Judg by an inward Sence, that ſome things ſurpaſs her Power, as a blind Man may find that a rock is too heavy for him to lift, and the greateſt tryal of his ſtrength would but convince him of his Weakneſs; ſo that we mean not that the Eye can ſee Inviſibles, but only the limits of it's own Activity, and conſequently, that ſome Objects are Diſproportioned to it. And *Ariſtotle* himſelf ſays, that the Eye diſcerns both Light and Darkneſs, and though Darkneſs is only a Privation of Light, and cannot conſequently be an Object of Sight; yet by the Different Affection of the Organ it may be perceived; from whence it appears, that the Intellect being capable by it's proper Light to Judge not only of it ſelf and it's own Acts, as well as of other things, there is no need of an External as well as an Internal Principle, the one to perceive and the other to judg, ſince one is ſufficient for both.

Whether we may diſcourſe of Things above Reaſon.

But notwithſtanding what hath been propoſed, there ſtill ſeems to remain one Difficulty, which is. How we can juſtify our preſuming to diſcourſe at all of things tranſcending Reaſon? Since it may not be intelligible, how we ſpeak of any thing that ſurpaſſes our Reaſon, becauſe our Words about ſuch muſt either expreſs clear and diſtinct *Ideas* or elſe not; if they do not, what we ſay muſt be Nonſence, or like Parrots, we only entertaining our Hearers with Words, which we our ſelves do not underſtand; if they do, then we comprehend thoſe things which are ſaid to be incomprehenſible. But ſince this hath been partly objected and anſwered before, we ſhall by way of Illuſtration reaſſume the Arguments propoſed already as well as propoſe others, which may help us the better to underſtand, what we have offered, and the better to remember it, eſpecially ſince from what we have already propoſed, ſeveral hints and conſiderations may be taken, in order to our fuller Information.

Of the difference of Ideas.

But before we proceed to this, it may be requiſite to propoſe ſome Diſtinctions, and then make Application of them. And *Firſt*, to make ſome Diſtinctions, of the Notions or Conceptions of the Mind, and to name thoſe we have occaſion to employ. Whether the *Ideas* or Conceptions we have be Simple or Compound, they may be diſtinguiſhed into Particular and Diſtinct, or General and Obſcure. So when a Navigator firſt gets ſight of unknown Land, he hath but a dark and confuſed appearance of it, not diſcerning whether the Shoar be Rocky, or what Creeks or Harbours belong to it; nor can he

he tell whether the Land be inhabited, and if it is, what manner of buildings are upon it; which he will ſoon be ſatisfyed of when he goes a ſhoar. But further, of ſome things we have an *adequate*, of others but an *inadequate* Conception; as ſuppoſing the Navigator ſhould look towards the main Sea, though he might ſee things diſtinctly a good way; yet at the Virge of the Senſible Horizon, he would think the Sea and the Sky joyned together, and yet he muſt conclude, that the utmoſt Extent of the Ocean in ſight, was but part of it, and might extend a great way further.

Some Diſtinctions or Notions of the Conceptions of the Mind.

Thoſe Notions, or Conceptions which we call confuſed, or *inadequate*, are ſeveral of them Negative, as when we ſpeak of Privations or Negations, as Blindneſs, Ignorance, Death, *&c.* The *Ideas* which we have indeed of things that are ſquare and round, black and white, and thoſe whoſe Shapes and Colours makes them Objects of Sight, are Poſitive; but when a Spirit or Atom is ſaid to be Inviſible, the Conceptions are Negative, which are obſcure and confuſed, becauſe indefinite; wanting thoſe Marks by which we perceive and diſtinguiſh viſible Subſtances; and when we ſay things are impoſſible, we have an obſcure and in diſtinct Conception of what we mean, repreſenting ſome way by which ſuch things might be effected probably, if they were done; attended with a perception of the inſufficiency of thoſe ways. Another Difference we have of the Notions of Things is, that for want of better Terms, they may be called primary or direct, and others, the Knowledg we have of which is by Inference

from more known and clearer Truths, which may be called an illative or inferred Knowledg. As when a Geometrician defines an *Hyperbole*, it gives me a diſtinct *Idea* of it; but when this *Hyperbole* is proved to have a Relation to a ſtrait Line called *Aſymptote*, which by being prolonged, comes nearer to the continued ſide of an *Hyperbole*, and yet, let them be never ſo far drawn, 'twill never touch it; this Demonſtration gives me an Illative Truth, evinced only by a train of Ratiocinations, which the Imagination can have but a confuſed and dim *Idea* of. Another Diſtinction chiefly belongs to the Notions we have of true or falſe Propoſitions, ſome of our Conceptions being *Symmetrcial*, and every way conſiſtent, having two Qualifications; one of which is, that all the Parts are conſiſtent amongſt themſelves, and the other, where the *Idea* is conſiſtent with all other Truths; ſome of theſe are *Chymerical* or *Aſymetrical*, the contrariety of Parts they conſiſt of deſtroying themſelves, as a Triangular Square, or a Sunſhiny Night; or are abſurd and extravagant, repugnant to ſome known Truth or Rule of Reaſon.

Some Obſervations in reference to Things above Reaſon.

To theſe Diſtinctions we ſhall add the following Obſervations; *Firſt*, That the Mind of Man is ſo framed, that being duly inſtructed, it can perceive it's own Deficiency in ſome reſpects, and the clearneſs of other *Ideas*; and thus finds, that ſome things are diſproportioned to her; as when we conſider the Dimenſions of Space, or of the Univerſe, we cannot conceive them ſo great, but that they be yet greater, or exceed the bounds of a former Conception; as when the

the Eye looks upon the main Ocean, let us ſee never ſo far, yet our ſight is far ſhort of the Extent of that Object. And thus the Mind, by the Senſe of her own Weakneſs, may judg what is, and what is not above Reaſon; for by that Term, we mean not ſuch things as the Rational Soul can have no perception at all off: for of ſuch we can have no Capacity to ſpeak or think like Men; but as the Rational Soul is Conſcious of what ſhe does, and feels and perceives, that ſhe knows ſeveral things clearly and diſtinctly, and by that finds them within the reach of her Capacities; but when ſhe comtemplates other Objects, ſhe finds them far beyond her Power. A ſecond Obſervation about the Mind of Man is, that it hath a faculty of drawing Conſequences from known Truths of greater Extent, than the Power it hath of forming clear and diſtinct *Ideas*, ſo that by Inferences it may be convinced of the Exiſtence of ſome things, whoſe Nature and Properties it can have no conceptions of. Nor is it a Wonder, Men ſhould be better able to draw Inferences and infer Propoſitions, than to diſcover their Natures; ſince it is ſufficient to our purpoſe, to know that ſuch things are, though we have not clear and diſtinct *Ideas* of them; and ſince the Rules, *what is produced muſt have a Cauſe*; *from Truth nothing but Truth rightly follows*, are eaſie and evident, and enable the Mind, to draw Inferences, about things that are Obſcure and Abſtruſe.

Theſe Notions applyed to the things ſaid to be above Reaſon.

Theſe things being premiſed, we ſhall proceed to apply theſe Notions, to the three ſort of things formerly repreſented as *above Reaſon.* For ſome Objects are of ſo peculiar and immenſe a Nature, that without any Laborious Diſquiſition the Soul can perceive what things are above her Capacity, and whether ſhe can form Conceptions of them, fit to be acquieſced in; which ſort, being inconceivable we call *Supra-Intellectual.* But when by duly conſidering the Attributes and Operations of Things, we find ſome Property belonging to them, or that they do ſomething, which by reflecting on the ways of working, and the being of ſome Body we know, we find them not reducible to any thing that we do, or derivable from them, we then call this Property or Operation *inexplicable*; or that it cannot be intelligibly accounted for, which is the Second ſort of Things above Reaſon. But further, the Rational Soul being already furniſhed with innate or primitive *Ideas*, as well as Rules to diſtinguiſh True and Falſe, upon examination of ſome Things, and making Inferences about them, which ſeem to be True and Good Conſequences, yet not Reconcileable to ſome manifeſt Truth, or acknowledged Propoſition, and when further ſhe finds other Truths ſo Harmonious and Agreeable, that there is no diſagreement, and theſe *Heteroclite* Truths are Aſymeterical with the reſt, that we cannot admit them, without allowing that grand Abſurdity, *that Contradictories may both be true*; as in the Inſtance of the Diviſibility of a ſtreight Line, *ad Infinitum*, ſo that a Line of one Foot may be divided into as many Parts as a Line of three, which manifeſtly

feſtly ſeems an Abſurdity, and repugnant to common Senſe, contradicting a Common Notion of *Euclid*, on which Geometry is founded, theſe ſort of Things above Reaſon we call *Aſymetrical* or *Unſociable*; of which kind ſome Inſtances may be given amongſt thoſe Controverſies (as *de Compoſitione Continui*) where which ſide ſoever you diſpute on, the Objections cannot be anſwered, which ſhew what you offer contradictory to ſome Primitive Truth, or one that is acknowledged; ſo that of the three kind of Things above Reaſon, as thoſe I have ſtyled unconceivable, our *Ideas* are ſo ſlight, that they evidently appear to be incomprehenſible. And thoſe which we call *inexplicable* are ſuch as have no dependance upon the *Ideas* we are furniſhed with, nor reſemble in their Manner of Working, any Agent we are acquainted with. And thoſe we call unſociable, are ſuch as have Notions belonging to them, or may have Inferences drawn from them, either diſagreeable to our Primitive *Ideas*, or inconſiſtent with the Rules we are furniſhed to judg of them.

Somethings above Reaſon referable to more than one kind.

But though we divide things above Reaſon into three kinds, yet ſome Objects may in different reſpects be referred to more than one kind, eſpecially that Nobleſt of Objects God, whoſe Nature and Attributes afford us Inſtances to this Purpoſe. When God then made the World out of Nothing, or when he diſcerns the ſecret Intentions of the Mind, and unites an Immaterial Spirit to a Human Body, and continues that Union ſo many Years upon ſuch Wonderful Conditions, theſe things are *Inexplicable*, being not reducible to any ways of working, we are

acquainted with, our Minds being able only to modify themſelves, by different Methods of thinking; and as for Bodies without us, the Effect they can have upon one another, can be by Local Motion only, by which Natural conſequences are produced. And if we conſider the Preſcience of future Contingences, which Perfection only belongs to God, and yet ſome famous for Wit, have endeavoured to reconcile this Precognition with the free Will of Man, in order to which, they have been obliged to maintain ſomething that contradicts ſome known Truth or Dictates of Reaſon; this will furniſh us with an Inſtance of Truths, whoſe Symmetry with other Bodies we cannot diſcern, by the uſe of our Reaſon; and this kind we call *Unſociable.* And as for the Third ſort of things above Reaſon, called *Supra-Intellectual*, this muſt certainly belong to God, which comprehends Perfections in the higheſt degree, which therefore cannot be comprehended by us, who want ſeveral, and have but moderate ſhares of the reſt of them. We have a power indeed to frame an *Idea* of a Being infinitely perfect, by which we may diſcover the Original of it, God, from other Objects, But if we obſerve minutely, what is contained in the Notion of Omnipotence, Omniſcience and Eternity, and thoſe other Attributes confluently united in the Abyſs of God's Perfections, our Capacities are far ſurmounted by that unlimited and unparalelled Object, which as we can diſcover that it exiſts, and is endowed with all the Perfections we can conceive, ſo we muſt diſcern that it hath Perfections which we cannot conceive. And this diſcovery

covery of his Incomprehenſibleneſs, may be learned without ſubtle Diſquiſitions, or trains of Conſequences; if we uſe but due Attention; the Mind eaſily finding her ſelf as unable to meaſure Divine Perfections, as the Dimenſions of Space, whoſe Extent beyond the Limits we can reach we may conceive to be ſtill greater and greater.

How we ought to conſider Things above Reaſon.

But to proceed to a further Application of what we have premiſed, we eaſily acknowledg it arrogance, to pretend to talk of infinite things with the ſame clearneſs, as of thoſe things within the compaſs of our Intellect; yet it is not unlawful to ſpeak rationally of thoſe things, all allowable Notions not being of the ſame Order; and if none were to be admitted, but what we have clear Notions of, we have indeed no good Notions of privileged things, and indeed but few or none of any that we think our ſelves moſt knowing in. And when we ſpeak of things above Reaſon, though we have no adequate Notions of them, yet the inadequate Notions we have, may ſerve us to diſtinguiſh them from others, as well as from one another, as of thoſe Negative Notions of Inviſible, Incomprehenſible, and others which we called inferred, they attending remote Inferences, by which one Truth is drawn from another; as Geometricians infer from ſome Propoſitions in *Euclid*, that a ſtreight Line may be divided *ad infinitum*. For of this and other privileged things, we retain allowable Notions, as appears from what excellent Mathematicians have ſaid of *ſurd Numbers* and *incommeaſurable Magnitudes*, of which we have no ſuch Symmetrical Conceptions, as of many other

other things, which are of a more Intelligible Order. And not only by Experience, and the Confeſſions of others, but alſo their unſucceſful Attempts, I am inclined to think, that God, who is a free Agent, having made Intelligent Beings, may have made Ranks and Orders of them, whereof Men may not be the Principal; and if not, he hath made us Men of a limited Nature and Capacity; and hath furniſhed him with innate *Ideas* or Principles, or a Faculty and Diſpoſition to frame them, as occaſions happen to excite them. But as he deſigned Man, but a limited Capacity, his Underſtanding is ſuitably framed, that the innate or acquired *Ideas* and primitive Axioms it is endowed with, and by reference or ſimilitude it judges of other Notions and Propoſitions, are not extended to all Objects that may be known; but only thoſe that have Affinity, or ſome Proportion to thoſe primary *Ideas* and Rules of Truth; which are ſufficient to help us to the Attainment of a competent, though not a perfect Knowledg, of as much as God thought fit to allow us in our preſent State.

How we are to think or diſcourſe of Things above Reaſon.

From whence it appears, that it is allowable to contemplate and diſcourſe of things above Reaſon, ſince we may have ſome, though but dull, Conceptions; yet we are not to ſpeak of ſuch Objects, as if we comprehended them, or knew ſo much of them as of other things, ſince in theſe Matters we ought to uſe a Caution and modeſt Diffidence. Nor indeed, is it any prejudice to ſet Limits, as the Author of Nature hath, to Human Knowledg; ſince the Objects which are above Reaſon are much leſs Numerous,

rous, than thoſe which our Knowledg may be improved to extend to, and which we are more concerned to know well, than to puzzle our ſelves about things that are incomprehenſible; thoſe Subjects containing enough to employ our Curioſity, without tiring our Reaſon with Objects above it. And yet we may enquire into thoſe other Subjects, ſince beſides what is above Reaſon, they may contain ſome things that may not ſurpaſs it; the Knowledg of which may be attained by the due uſe of it. Thus we may ſtudy the Nature of Bodies, which belong to Natural Philoſophy, though we cannot frame a true Notion of Body in general; for if we purſue the Notion of it, it leads us into the intricate Controverſy, *de compoſitione Continui*, where our Underſtanding will be left in the dark. Thus Surveyors, Carpenters, *&c.* find ſeveral Affections of the Square Figure, of uſe to them in their buſineſs, though that Property, that it's ſide and diagonal are incommenſurable, is unknown to moſt of them, and were they told of it, would only lead them into Difficulties. And ſo about things above Reaſon, if our Enquiries are well managed, they may be ſerviceable, ſince they may teach us both to know the Objects, and our ſelves better, as they inform us of our Ignorance and Inſufficiency to comprehend all things; and will thus recompence our trouble, eſpecially if we employ our ſelves on that Nobleſt of Subjects, the Contemplation of God; for he hath ſo contrived things, that it is ſcarce poſſible for us, to want an *Idea of* him, at leaſt to repreſent him as an *exiſtent Being*, more perfect than any other; and yet when

we duly conſider his wonderful Attributes, we are far from being able to comprehend him, which ought not to diſcourage us, ſince we are rewarded with the honour and ſatisfaction of diſcovering more of that Excellent Object; his Immenſity ſtill giving us Scope for further Enquiry, without hopes of reaching to the Bounds of his Excellences, or to diſcover they have any Bounds at all.

But to conclude, I ſhould take more pains to diſtinguiſh things above Reaſon from others, had we not always a Criterion within us, ready to aſſiſt us; for the wiſe Author of things hath endowed us with ſuch a quick internal Senſation, that it eaſily diſcerns Objects diſproportioned to it's Abilities; as the Eye wants nothing elſe but the dazling Sun to tell it's Luſtre. But perhaps it may be here ſaid, that we ought to leave it undetermined, whether Man's Intellect it ſelf, is incapable by the aſſiſtance of any Light, to diſcover things, which we ſay are above Reaſon; and it might be better to allow, that ſome things belonging to theſe Subjects, afford us leſs diſtinct *Ideas*, than we have of the moſt difficult of thoſe, which we acknowledge not to ſurpaſs our Reaſon; and that to determine poſitively about theſe things, we muſt uſe a method of Reaſoning ſuitable to their Natures, yet to deny things above Reaſon, is rather to debaſe than exalt that Faculty, if we allow it not to enjoy as much Truth as we are able to procure for it; and thus if Geometry, or Revelation, or Experience aſſure us, that ſuch things *are*, and what they *do*, though not *what* they *are*, and *how* they *act*, we ought no more to

ſlight

ſlight the ſtudy of ſuch Truths, no more than we would deny to look into other Objects, we cannot look through; ſo that we ought to entertain theſe Truths, which we can have any certain Knowledg of, as well as thoſe we can comprehend, ſince they are as much nobler as they are obſcure; and therefore an imperfect Knowledg of them is more deſirable, than a more perfect one of things Inferior.

CHAP. VIII.

Containing advices in judging of things, ſaid to Tranſcend Reaſon.

THat there are things above Reaſon, may appear from the foregoing Diſcourſe, we ſhall in the next place conſider, what ways we ought to take, to avoid being impoſed upon, in judging of ſuch things as are above Reaſon, and ſuch things as are not; we ſhall therefore enquire what Rules and Directions are to regulate our Method of Reaſoning, and enable us to judge of thoſe we meet with, concerning ſuch ſublime Subjects. Yet in theſe Rules, we are not to propoſe Logical Rules about things above Logick, or ſuch as by being remote or abſtruſe, are Anamalous; therefore inſtead of Rules, we ſhall only propoſe Advices; which may ſerve as Cautions to avoid ſome Errors and Miſtakes about ſuch abſtruſe Matters.

What Rules are requiſite to diſtinguiſh Things above Reaſon.

And *Firſt*, *About priviledged things, or things above Reaſon, we admit not any affirmative Aſſertion,*

The Firſt Advice.

tion, without ſuch proofs to evince them, as are ſufficient in their kind. By privilege things we mean ſuch as are of a very abſtruſe Nature, endowed with peculiar Affections and Attributes, Rules agreeable to their particular Conditions, being requiſite to Judge and Reaſon of them; ſome added to, and others different from, what Men commonly make uſe of about familiar things, which are more adequate to our Underſtanding. But to conſider the lately propoſed Advice, it is grounded upon this conſideration, that we ought to have a ſufficient Reaſon for giving our Aſſent to any thing as a Truth; and though whatever is about Reaſon, may have Affections alſo above Reaſon, yet we are not to believe that ſuch Affections belong to it, without particular proof; for tho' Propoſitions about ſuch things may be framed contrary to one another, to believe both, would be to aſſent to one if not two Falſities. And if we aſſent to one only, we ought to examin the Mediums of Probation on both ſides, and by thoſe to judge which ought to be rejected; for there are ſome, who out of Ignorance and paſſive Deluſion, or Deſign, affirm what they pleaſe about Privileged Things, and when Reaſon oppoſes them, aſſert, that ſuch things being above Reaſon, are not to be judged of by it. But it may reaſonably be ſaid, that if their Aſſent be not grounded on ſome Rational Argument, they muſt be Fools that believe them; and if it be, than the Argument ought to be produced, for ſince the Argument is framed by Human Underſtanding, it may be judged of by the ſame; and though the Subject is above Reaſon, yet the Argument

Argument being grounded upon Reaſon, ought to be intelligible.

Indeed there is a difference betwixt being able to know the Nature of a thing, and to give an Account of our Inducements to believe it, and though we have no Inducements to aſſent to what is Truth, yet notwithſtanding that is Truth, our Aſſent is irrational.

But here it is to be obſerved, though we ſay, that the Proofs of ſuch Aſſertions ought to be *ſufficient in their kind*, we expect not ſuch Proof to be rigid Demonſtrations, Hiſtorical and Political ones, being incapable of Mathematical or Metaphyſical Demonſtrations; yet as Truths they deſerve our Aſſent; ſo that a Proof may be Rational without a rigid Demonſtration, and worthy to be acquieſced in. And therefore if any thing appears to be revealed by God, in reference to his Nature, Actions or Decrees; we ought to believe them, becauſe of ſome, as his Preſcience, Mercy, *&c.* no better Proofs can be had; and of others, as what was done before the Creation, and how we are to be diſpoſed of after Death, we can have no other Proofs of. And tho' ſome object againſt ſuch Truths, becauſe they ſurpaſs our Underſtanding, we are not therefore to think they ſurmount the Divine Intellect; and even of thoſe things, that happen in the Mind of Man, it is impoſſible to diſcover what another thinks, except he does it himſelf; as what a Man purpoſes to do, or what determination his Thoughts may have; but theſe things, tho' not diſcoverable till we are informed of them, are not above our Reaſon after Information: But that, as hath been offered in the foregoing Chapter,

Chapter, there may be things, though plainly propoſed, yet not comprehenſible to our Underſtanding, ſome think an Affront to that Noble Faculty; and deny not only ſome privileged things, but eſpecially more than one kind of them, ſince they think it places too narrow Limits to our Underſtanding, and debars them of that deſireable Knowledg, which is converſant about the Nobleſt Objects. But this may be eaſily anſwered, by repreſenting, that the Intellegibility of Human Underſtanding, is not neceſſary to the Truth or Exiſtence of a Thing, no more than the Faculty of ſeeing, to the Exiſtence of an Atom, a Corpuſcle of Air, or the Effluvia of a Load-ſtone, or the Odoriferous Effluvia of Ambergreeſe, or Muſk; and as ſome Creatures may diſcern what is not perceivable by others, as a Man cannot trace a Hare or Deer as Hounds do, by the Effluvia of their Foot-ſteps. And this may be further Illuſtrated, by repreſenting, that though a Childs Intellects underſtand not the Affections of Parabola's and Hyperbola's, *&c.* yet it hinders not the Exiſtence of ſuch Figures, nor their Affections from being true or falſe. And though we allow ſome things to be privileged, yet we ought not to be denyed a total Ignorance of thoſe ſublime Objects, though we are Ignorant of many things as well as of their Conſequences: Thus Antient Geometricians were acquainted with a Rectangular Triangle, conceiving it to be a Figure conſiſting of three ſtreight Lines, two of which make a right Angle, though at the firſt they did not know all it's Properties and Affections; ſince before *Pythagoras*'s Time it was not

not known, that the Square of the *Hypothenusa*, was equal to the Squares of both the other ſides; and it is more probable, that they were unacquainted with the Difficulties attending the Diviſibility of Lines *ad infinitum*, deducible from the equality of the two Squares to the Single Square.

And tho' ſome of the Perfections of God, as well as his Works, are above our Knowledg; yet there are ſo many things both worthy and poſſible to be known, that they are ſufficient to employ the greateſt Wits as well as Philoſophers. And even about theſe kind of Subjects, ſeveral things conſiderable may be diſcovered, tho' our Underſtandings cannot penetrate them; yet they are not ſo great, but that there is Scope enough for human Knowledg to improve it ſelf; for ſome things that are hard to be underſtood, or contrary to common Rules of Probability, may not belong to what we call privileged Things, as the Paradoxes about ſurd Quantities, duplicate and triplicate Proportion, and other things capable of Mathematical Demonſtrations; nor are ſuch of this kind which are ſtyled Philoſopical Myſteries, as the Peripatetick Subſtantial Forms, which are only Scholaſtick Chimeras. But though we ſhall not ſet down the Characteriſticks of Privileged Things; yet moſt of them are primary in their Kind, as God and thoſe things which immediately flow from him; or ſuch things as involve the No ion of Infinity; or ſuch, that in ſome main Queſtion, are incumbered with inſuperable Difficulties, which being the ſigns of Privileged things, their Number is much leſs than their Abſtruſe-

neſs. And further, as to theſe things, we ought to regulate our Belief, by our Perceptions, and not our Wiſhes, and muſt not think, that nothing is above our Capacities, becauſe we wiſh there were none; nor will it make us as knowing as Angels, becauſe we deſire it, nor can we be immortal becauſe we would not dye. But thoſe things which at firſt ſight appear too abſtruſe for our Nature, muſt needs be exempt from Rules imployed about common Things; and ſuch Rules, or Vulgar Notions cannot be extended to Subjects ſo profound.

The Second Advice. The Second advice is, *That we be not haſty to frame Negatives above privileged Things, or to reject Propoſitions, or Explications concerning them, at leaſt as if they were abſurd or impoſſible.* What Caution ought to be uſed in affirming, or rejecting Opinions, in Natural Things, before Men are well acquainted with the Hiſtorical part that belongs to the Subject Men propoſe to make Judgment of, is eaſily obſerved; and therefore we ought to be much more ſo in forming Negative Propoſitions of Things above the reach of Human Reaſon; nor ought we rudely to reject the Opinions of Learned Men, who differ from us about ſuch things; ſince miſtakes about things ſo ſublime ought the eaſieſt to be pardoned, becauſe not eaſily avoided; and ſince we may eaſily fall into as great miſtakes our ſelves, which ought to incline us to tollerate other Mens Opinions, our own being much ſhort of Science. Yet on the other ſide, we ought to be wary how we are impoſed upon by proofleſs Aſſertions; yet there is a great deal of difference, betwixt aſſenting to a proofleſs affirmation,

tion, and framing Negative Concluſions about Opinions, which for ought we know may be true. So that we ought to ſuſpend our Judgment, when no ſufficient Proof appears on the other ſide; or our Aſſent ought to be ſo wary and unprejudiced to Opinions, though but weakly proved; that the Mind may receive any better Argument to the contrary without Obſtinacy or Surprize.

Yet it ſeems hard to avoid Conjectures, even about ſublime Subjects, though we can frame none but ſlight Ones; but this is not ſtrictly required, but only that we conſider our ſelves ſubject to thoſe Errors, and be apt to lay down, and receive the contrary upon better Information; as ſuppoſing four Men were walking, and at a diſtance diſcovered, a moving Body of Human Stature, though by Circumſtances we might conclude it to be a Man, yet what Qualities he had we could not diſcern, and conſequently, could not Judg. And for that reaſon, if I ſhould ſay he was Young and Handſom, ſince you could not prove to the Contrary, it would be raſh to cenſure my Opinion. And though we are Naturally uneaſy under wavering Opinions, I ſhould be apt to reſemble the Man, to ſome Body I knew, yet ſhould allow my Conjecture fallible, and ſhould expect that upon a nearer view, I might diſmiſs my firſt *Idea*, and receive a New One, though different from the former, and ſhould compare him in likeneſs to another Man.

But though we diſſwade you againſt the frameing of Negative Propoſitions haſtily, yet we are not againſt them being form'd at all, for ſome-

times it is better to deny things, than to affirm, that they belong to a Subject above our Reaſon: Which obſervation may be of Uſe, either when the Negative is not grounded upon Axioms derived from the uſual Courſe of Nature, or dubious Propoſitions, or the remote Principles of Knowledg, but upon Catholick and Metaphyſical Axioms, or Truths derived from ſome clear, though inadequate Notion, of the Nature of the Thing treated of: Or when we have a Proof by Revelation, or the Attributes of the thing we treat of and contemplate; for any thing may be denyed, inconſiſtent with that poſitive Attribute. Thus though we do not comprehend what God is; yet being informed by the Light of Nature and Revelation, that he is an Infinitely Perfect and Intelligent Being, we may deny him to be a Corporeal Subſtance, Mortal or Corruptible.

The Third Advice.

The Third advice is, *That a Matter of Fact, or other Truth about Privileged Things, being proved by Arguments competent in their kind, we ought not to deny it, meerly becauſe we cannot explain, or perhaps ſo much as conceive the Modus of it.*

A diſtinction of the Term Modus.

But before we proceed to Juſtify this advice, we ſhall proceed to diſtinguiſh the Term *Modus*, frequently employed in ſeveral Diſcourſes. Sometimes we deny, that one thing can belong to another; as when we ſay, we know not how one Creature can Create another, how there can be a Line, neither ſtreight nor crooked, or a Finite Number neither even or odd; but commonly when we ſay, we underſtand not the Modus of any thing, we mean, that we underſtand not, how the Property or Attribute of a Subject

Subject produces it's Effects. The first may be called a possible *Modus*, and the later an actual *Modus*, in both which Acceptations we may find Instances to our purpose.

And *First*, we cannot conceive, how a short Line or Finite Quantity can be divided, *ad infinitum* or how infinite Parts should make but a Finite Total; yet Geometry obliges us to admit it. Of the other Part of our Ignorance of the *Modus* of Things, we have Instances enough, even in Natural and Corporeal Things, which appears from the Disputes of Philosophers, and the Confessions of Men both Judicious and Moderate, being ignorant of the manner several Bodies bring to pass, what they perform. And not to dispute the Cohesion of the Parts of Matter in the Minutest Principles and Primary Bodies; we are ignorant, how a Rational Soul can act upon a Human Body, and how the Understanding and the Will, can act upon one another; nor is the manner of the Memories retaining *Ideas* of Things, better Understood, it being inconceivable, how in the narrow compass of a Human Brain, there should be so many Thousand distinct Cells or Impressions, to retain the Signatures of so many Languages and Characters, each consisting of so many Words, besides the *Ideas* of so many Schemes, Faces, Models, Buildings, and other Objects, & besides the *Ideas* of so many Notions and Thoughts, as well as other Things; and how these shall retain such lasting Impressions, and in so exact an Order, and that upon the least hint, at the Command of the Will, so many Words, Circumstances and Things should be produced in a regular Order.

And beſides thoſe abſtruſe Things, of which Philoſophers have confeſſed their Ignorance of the *Modus*, there would appear ſeveral others belonging to the things we ſhould give our ſelves the trouble to enquire into. And if we reflect on the Nature of Place and Local Motion, we might find difficulties enough in other Subjects, of which now we take no Notice of, eſpecially if we ſtudied their Natures; and our Acquieſcence in many things, proceeds rather from our want of Curioſity and Skill, than our greater Knowledg. Nor are we leſs ignorant of the *Modus* of the Exiſtence of Things Corporeal: And I doubt not but to a Being above the reach of our Senſes, Natural Theology may aſcribe ſome things whoſe *Modus* is not to be conceived by our Underſtanding; as the Preſcience of Future Accidents. And ſeveral Tenents allowed by Chriſtians, Jews and Heathens, as parts of Natural Theology, ſeems as unintelligible as thoſe oppoſed in Revealed Theology. Nor can I apprehend, how an Intellect, Will and Affections are diſtinctly in God, as they are attributed to him, more then how there can be a Trinity, not as made obſcure by Diſputants, but as the Goſpel expreſſes it. Nor can I better underſtand, how God who is an Immaterial Subſtance, produces Motion in Matter, than how he Created it; nor is it Satisfactory to ſay, that the Soul moves the Body, ſince I believe, it only guides other Agents, it acting not upon a Phyſical account, but by the Appointment and Power of God, by which the Soul and Body were United. And ſince we cannot conceive how a Rational Soul can move Matter, it my be a

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Queſtion how God Almighty can be conceived to do it.

On this occaſion we ſhall obſerve, that as it is looked upon as Inceiveable, how God can ſee our Thoughts, ſo it is as much, how he can come to the Knowledg of our Actions; for as we cannot diſcover the Motions of Bodies by any thing, but our Senſes, eſpecially our ſight, and ſince thoſe Senſations require Organs duly conſtituted, I cannot apprehend, how we can explain, the Perception of Viſible Objects, without an Organ, or a Corporeal Medium, the Deity not being united, as a Human Soul is, to any Portion of Matter, as it is allowed by us. And ſome of theſe may be refered to what we call a poſſible *Modus*, being *toto genere* inexplicable; both how the Attribute exiſts in the Subject, and how the Cauſe produces it's Effects.

But by this we deny not God the Power of moving Matter, nor of perceiving it's Motions; for to prevent miſtakes in propoſing this advice, we excepted thoſe things, where competent Proof in it's kind might be offered.

But to proceed to theſe Proofs, *Firſt*, if we ſee an Effect which muſt needs flow from ſuch a Cauſe or Agent, we may conclude, there is ſuch a Cauſe, though we know not the manner of it's producing ſuch an Effect. Thus though a Man who is no Mathematician, cannot underſtand how an Aſtronomer can foretel Eclipſes, yet when the ſucceſs anſwers the Predictions, he will believe the Aſtronomer fore-knew what happened. And ſo Learned Men unacquainted with that Part of Navigation, which ſome Mo-

call *Lumen Euretica*, or the Art of Steering to Harbours, would not well conceive how a Ship, a Thouſand Miles from any ſhoar, ſhould be directed juſt to a little Harbour, which neither the Pilot nor any other ever ſaw; and though we cannot directly conceive how there ſhould be ſuch an Art; yet we know there is, ſince without it, Navigators could not find the Ports in the Eaſt and Weſt Indies. A Second ſort of poſitive Proofs conſiſts of conſequences regularly infered, from any acknowledged or demonſtrated Truth; ſuch as Mathematical Propoſitions, and Corollaries; which though nakedly propoſed ſeem incredible: yet evidently follow from demonſtrated Truths. Thus ſome cannot conceive, how there ſhould be a Million of Circles, whoſe Circumferences come nearer and nearer, to one another, and to a ſtreight Line aſſigned, and yet none interſect each other, nor the ſame ſtreight Line except in the ſame Point; and yet this is deduced by Geometricians from *Euclids* Sixteenth Propoſition of his third Element. And though we cannot conceive how two Lines, little diſtant at their remoteſt Ends ſhould perpetually incline towards each other without ever meeting; yet this is admitted in *Linea Conchides of Nichomedes*. To theſe an inſtance may be taken of the Diviſibility of a ſtreight Line, *ad infinitum*, deduced from the incommenſurableneſs of the ſide and Diagonal of a Square. Another Inſtance may be taken from Divine Preſcience, which follows from the Infinite Perfections of God, though none can conceive how Contingency can be fore-ſeen. To which we may add, Divine Revelation, which is competently atteſted.

But

But to proceed to the Fourth Advice, which is, *That when we treat of Privileged Subjects, we are not bound always, to think every thing false, that seems to thwart, some received Dictate of Reason.* Which will easily appear from the Application of some things delivered above, by way of Corollary; for as a great many dictates of Reason are Negative, so Negative Propositions are the results of the Repugnancy some things have to the positive Dictates of Reason, if such contain but gradual and limited Truths, unduly extended to privileged Subjects; so that though a thing be really true, it may seem false, if Judged by those limited Dictates of Reason. And in Philosophy as well as Theology, many things are rejected, because unintelligible. Which Practice often misleads us, when applyed to things above Reason, as some *Modus*'s of Things Corporeal do. And we think we have exactly enumerated the ways of Inexistence of an Attribute in a Subject, or of the Effects of one Body upon another, when we have overlooked one or other, and perhaps the true one; though it may likewise happen, that the *Modus* is above our Intellect. The School Philosophers, amongst the ways enumerated of Bodies working upon one another, mistook the true ways by which Odours and Sounds are communicated; and therefore had recourse to unintelligible things called *Species Intentionales.* Whereas Modern Naturalists know, that Odours are communicated by Effluvia from the Odorous Body affecting our Nostrils; and that Sounds depend on the Undulating Motion of the Air communicated by the Impulse of the agitated or vibrated

The Fourth Advice.

ted Parts of the Sonorous Body. But if we admit the Rational Soul to be an Immaterial Subſtance, we may find Inſtances enough within our ſelves; for as Men think it ſufficient to enumerate the ways of determining the Motion of a Body, to ſay, that it muſt be determined either in a Line which the impellent put it in, or which it was determined to move in by the Situation of the Body, to which the Motion was given, the Motion of the Animal Spirits, as well as ſome other internal Parts of the Body, may be determined by the Will, a way much different from the other. And how this Power of determining the Motion of a Body without a Power to give Motion, ſhould belong to an Immaterial Creature, which hath no Corporeal Parts, to reſiſt and alter the Line of it's Motion, will never perhaps be conceived by us, though God Almighty knows both how it exiſts in the Soul, and how the Soul exerts it ſelf and works on the Body.

An Objection conſidered.

But it may perhaps be objected, that if we allow Opinions contradictory to the Rules of Reaſon, why ſhould we trouble our ſelves to examin what is agreeable or diſagreeable to Reaſon; ſince diſcovering that an Opinion is contrary to it, will not aſſure us of it's falſity. But in anſwer to this, we are to conſider, what things we are diſcourſing of; nor do we diſallow the rejecting of Opinions, contrary to thoſe Rules, which were conſiderately framed. But in Caſes which have no Relation to thoſe Rules, we are not to ſubmit to the Judgment of them; and therefore to entertain an Opinion incongruous to ſuch a Rule, is not to oppoſe a genuin

genuin Dictate of Reaſon, but to rectify one that is erroneous, the Rules being expreſſed in more general & indefinite Terms than they ought to be. And therefore that muſt be moſt Rational, that is agreeable to Rules of Reaſon, framed on the fulleſt Information.

Some Cautions about this Rule.

And here it is to be obſerved, that the Advice or Rule propoſed is concerned in very few Caſes, in which Inconveniences are obviated by a double Caution. The firſt is, that the Opinion exempted from common Rules is not a precarious *Tenet*, but made out by proper Arguments. The ſecond is, that it is not to contradict right Reaſon, but bad Reaſon, limiting Rules, too haſtily concluded to be general, either not ſufficiently informing themſelves with particulars, or they preſumed things were not, becauſe they knew not their Exiſtence.

Another Objection conſidered.

But ſome may ſay, that the Dictates of Reaſon are the ſureſt Rules to frame Diſcourſes and Ratiocinations by, and are therefore unwilling to allow any Concluſion conformable to them; or to admit any thing ſo much privileged, as to be exempted from the Rules of Reaſon. But this Objection is rather grounded on ſome Ambiguity of Terms, than the Nature of things. For Reaſon is frequently taken for a ſet of Notions and Propoſitions, acquieſced in by a Sect of Reaſoners, which have Names given them from a particular diſcipline; as Aſtronomy, Chymiſtry, Opticks, *&c.* and with as much Propriety, it is uſed to ſignify the Rational Faculty it ſelf, duly diſpoſed and informed. In the firſt of theſe Senſes, it is but reaſonable to allow, that ſome things ought not to be judged of by the

the ſame Rules as others, ſome of theſe Rules being framed on the ſlight Obſervation of familiar things, either by the Vulgar, or ſuch as did not ſufficiently conſider the Nature of things, and yet ſetled Rules, that other Men inadvertently received for Dictates of Reaſon; whereas other Natures ought to have been conſidered as well as thoſe; for want of which the Rules have not been always proper and ſafe, when applyed to the Natures of things overlooked. Thus ſucceſſive Beings, as Time and Motion, are to be judged of by other Rules than Subſtances, whether Material or Corporeal. Thus Modern Metaphyſitians have diſcourſed of Modus's, Privations, Relations, and Extrinſical Denominations, in a different manner from that belonging to Bodies and Spirits; though theſe Subjects are confounded by the unskilful, without applying indifferently to the ſame Rules, or as they ſtyle them, Dictates of Reaſon.

But not to mention what may be ſaid of theſe unregarded or undiſtinguiſhed Natures, there are other more general and familiar Entities, wherein Inſtances more applicable to our preſent purpoſe may be found; for though other actual Beings are compounded of Eſſence and Exiſtence, yet the ſimplicity of the Divine Nature excludes ſuch a Compoſition, in a Being infinitely perfect, thoſe two being inſeparable, actual Exiſtence belonging to a Being infinitely perfect. Philoſophers generally believe Place, to be the contiguous concave Surface of an Ambient Body, like a Veſſel every way containing the Body that poſſeſſes it, with this difference,

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that a Veſſel is a moveable Place, but Place is conſidered as immoveable. Now if we ſuppoſe the Plenitude of the World, all Plants, Animals, *&c.* are in ſuch an Immoveable Place, ſo that what is no Place, is not at all; yet it appears not, whether the Firmament be a Place, ſince the ſame Philoſophers affirm the World to be finite; and therefore there can be no Ambient Body without it to confine it. And if the Uttermoſt Heaven ſhould by the Power of God, be impelled this way in a ſtreight Line, there would be a Motion, without change of Place, the uttermoſt Heaven being in none before, and by it's progreſſion does not come to be contained by a new Ambient Body. And accordingly thoſe Modern Ariſtotelians, that approve *Carteſius's* Definition of Local Motion, muſt believe, that the World may move without changing his Place, ſince it paſſes not from the Neighbourhood of ſome Bodies to others, ſince as it compriſes all Bodies, and is yet bounded, it can neither leave behind nor approach any. And though the *Carteſians* believing the World to be indefinite, are partly free from the force of this Argument, yet they muſt allow, that every Body is capable of Local Motion upon their own Hypotheſis: Yet the Univerſe is not; and every Body contained in it, hath a determinate Figure, yet the World being indefinite hath not. And though the *Ariſtotelians* allow the Diviſion of Entities into Subſtance and Accident, and accomodated their Rules to one or both; *Gaſſendus* hath introduced a third ſort of things, being neither Subſtance nor Accident, which are privileged things

things from their Rules, calculated for other Natures; this they call Space or Place; which the *Gaſſendiſts* will not allow to be a Subſtance, being neither Body nor Spirit, but ſomething that hath a Capacity to contain Bodies, and would remain or ſubſiſt, though all Subſtances were annihilated. Nor can it be an Accident, ſince that requires a Subſtance, according to to the Axiom, *Accidentis eſſe, eſt ineſſe*, whereas if the World were annihilated, that Space remaining would be capable of admiting a new World of the ſame Extent, if God pleaſed to create it; whence *Gaſſendus* ſaid, that in reſpect of Place, Bodies are rather Accidents, than the contrary. But if we examin the ſeveral Syſtems of Philoſophers, we ſhall find, that there is ſome thing in each of theſe Syſtems, to which one of theſe Rules may ſafely be applyed. And indeed the Mind is ſo much more deſirous to know, than to examin, whether ſhe does or not, that ſhe is apt to conclude thoſe things ſhe hath not duly conſidered, of the ſame Nature with thoſe ſhe judges of the ſame kind. And thus by gaining the Knowledg of things by way of Inference, the Mind gratifys both it's vanity and careleſneſs, taking ſuch Concluſions as Marks of the Excellency of it's Reaſon, which it does not exerciſe about them.

Another Objection conſidered.

But here perhaps it may be asked, if Reaſon is not the Director of our Diſcourſe, how muſt we judge of thoſe Rules, and diſcover their Falſity, if they are ſo; and how ſhall we diſtinguiſh betwixt Truth and Falſity, where thoſe Rules are laid aſide. To this we ſhall briefly anſwer, that ſince the *Criteria* of Truth cannot extend

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ad Infinitum, and we can only examin it by our Faculties, the clear perception of our Underſtanding is the beſt Aſſurance we can have in a Natural way, of Eſtimating the Truth of things of what kind ſo ever; for it is not by *Induction*, but *Evidence*, we know *ex vero nil niſi verum ſequitur*. Whence the Rational Faculty is primary to the Rules of Reaſoning, by which we judge of thoſe Axioms, which are the principles of Reaſoning by Inference; for as the Underſtanding is the Eye of the Mind, ſo there is this Analogy betwixt them, that as the Eye may diſcern ſome things Organically, as when it judges of a Line to be ſtreight by the application of a Ruler, or to be perpendicular by a Plumb-Line; or a Circle to be round by the help of a pair of Compaſſes; but the Eye judges of ſome things intuitively without the help of Inſtruments, as in judging of Colours, or the ſimilitude or diſſimilitude of Pictures; ſo there are ſome things the Mind judges of in an Organical way, by Rules and Hypotheſes, as part of the Theorems and Concluſions in Philoſophy and Divinity; but others it knows more immediately by Perception, by which we know prime Notions and Effata, or Metaphyſical Axioms, as that *Contradictory Propoſitions cannot both be true: From Truth nothing but Truth can legitimately be deduced; that two things that are equal each of them to a third thing, are equal to one another*; and *that a whole Number is either equal or odd.* And upon the ſame Evidence of Perception, we receive primitive *Ideas* and Perceptions, as of Extended Subſtance, Diviſibility, or Local Motion, a ſtreight Line, *&c.* And by this Internal

nal Light of Nature, we not only apply the Inſtruments of Knowledg, but alſo frame and examin them. This Light enables the Underſtanding to look about, and to conſider ſeparately and conjunct, the Nature of all things, without the Rules and Dictates of any particular Science; eſpecially by the aſſiſtance of general Axioms, and perpetual Catholick Truths, being of a higher Nature than the Rules of any particular Science. And by the help of this, the Underſtanding may perceive the Truth or Falſity of ſuch Rules, as cannot be diſcovered by thoſe that only conſult the Rules of their own particular Science, which they receive as certain. Thus Philoſophers found they could frame a clearer Notion of things, without conſidering, whether they were in Being or not, or when they ſuppoſed them not in Being; as we have a clear Conception of a Roſe in Winter, or of *Myriagon*, though there may be no ſuch real figure in the World. And yet when we conſider, that actual Exiſtence belongs to God, as a moſt perfect Being; by the ſame Light, that we could diſtinguiſh Eſſence and Exiſtence to be two different things in all other Beings, we could diſcern them inſeparable in God. And conſequently, that the Rule above mentioned, though the moſt General, is not Univerſal; but muſt be limited by Reaſon. And further, Philoſophers conſidering, that both all ſorts of Bodies, and the immaterial Souls of Men, are endowed with Qualities which are Accidents, include in the Notion of Subſtance, that it is the Subject of Accidents, or *Subſtare Accidentibus*, and accordingly *Subſtantia* is derived *à Subſtando*,

ſtando. But the Intellect having a Notion of an Infinitely Perfect Exiſtent Being, and conſidering, that to be the Subject of Accidents, is incongruous with the higheſt Perfection, concludes that in God there can be no Accidents. And this Concluſion is a part both of Chriſtian and Natural Theology, maintained by Metaphyſical and meer Rational Grounds. To be brief, the Native Light of the Mind may enable us, both to judg of thoſe Dictates that are taken for Rules of Reaſon, and to form others for privileged things, as far as they are ſo.

The Fifth Advice.

But to proceed to the Fifth Advice, *That where Privileged Things are concerned, we are not always bound to reject every thing as falſe, that we know not how to reconcile with ſomething that is true.* The Truth of this will in a great meaſure appear, from what hath been already ſaid. It will not be unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that there may be ſtreight Lines, a Thouſand times longer than others; and that a longer Line will afford more Parts than a ſhort one; for a Line equal to the ſhorter being taken out of the longer, there will remain of the later, a Line many times longer than the ſhorter; and further, it is generally believed, that no Number can exceed Infinite, ſince if a leſſer were capable of Acceſſion, without that, it could not be Infinite. Which Propoſitions will not be eaſily reconciled with the Geometrical Demonſtrations of Endleſs Diviſibility of all ſtreight Lines, they teaching that the ſhorteſt as well as the longeſt contain Infinite Parts.

Whether contradictories may be both True.

But here it may be asked, whether two Truths can be contradictory to one another: which though it is impoſſible; yet a gradual and limited Truth may in ſome Caſes, be irreconcileable by us to Univerſal Truth; ſince Propoſitions which we call True, may be diſtinguiſhed into Univerſal Metaphyſical Axioms, and Axioms that are Emergent or Collected, which are ſuch as are deduced from ſeveral Particulars compared, which agree in ſome things common to them all; and though ſome are ſo General, that they admit of no Exceptions; yet they may not be unlimitedly True, as *ex nihilo nihil fit*, ſince God being a Power Infinitely perfect, may exerciſe the Power of Creating. And in ſuch Caſes about privileged Things, to reconcile a Truth with a Propoſition, which is generally eſteemed True, will not preſently oblige us to reject either, as falſe; but to give one a limitation without deſtroying either, and to reſtrain it to ſuch things as it was firſt grounded on, and which it firſt ought to have been limited to. And if we allow Miracles to be true, Phyſical Propoſitions muſt only be limited, or what we call Collected Truths, deduced from the ſettled *Phænomena* of Nature, Subject to this Exception. That *they are true, where the irreſiſtible Power of God, or ſome other Supernatural Agent is not interpoſed to alter the Courſe of Nature.*

A Difficulty propoſed and anſwered.

If it be asked, whether there are no inconſiſtent Propoſitions, called Truths, where one of them is but a gradual or emergent Truth; We anſwer, that it's one thing to enquire, whether there are ſuch, where one is but a limited Truth,

Truth; and another, whether Abſolutely and Univerſally, it may appear to be no more to the Intellect; for ſince we Judg things repugnant, becauſe our *Ideas* ſeem inconſiſtent, if either of theſe Notions be framed amiſs, or eſtimated by a wrong Rule, we may think ſuch Propoſitions contradictory, that are not; as thoſe that employ their Imaginations about proper Objects of the Intellect, are apt to pronounce things unconceivable, becauſe they cannot imagin them to be; as if Fancy and the Intellect were of the ſame Extent. Thus ſome have denyed all immaterial Subſtances and imputed the Deity to a Corporeal Nature, rather than to allow an incomprehenſible Being; yet they allow their Imagination at the ſame to be a Corporeal Faculty. But beſides the Miſtaking of Things to be repugnant, by the Miſmanagement or undue Application of our Faculties; another may proceed from the ſhortneſs of our Underſtanding, being not ſo able to judg of Privileged Things, as of other Subjects, which makes us incapable of diſcovering that irreconcileableneſs, which more penetrating Faculties diſcern. As when we look towards the Sea, the Sky and the Water ſeem to meet at the Senſible Horizon; though as far diſtant as Heaven and Earth. And if the dry fine Powder of Oripament, and Indico, be skilfully mixed, they will produce a green, the Eye taking Notice only of an Uniform Mixture, neither blew nor yellow; but with a Microſcope you will plainly ſee blew and yellow grains mixed together. Which ſhews the Weakneſs of our Viſive Faculty, and that things may appear different as

they are viewed by a leſs or more diſcerning ſight. Thus yellow Diamonds are looked upon by Jewellers to be but Counterfeit, or at the beſt but Topazes, though a skilful Lapidary, by true Signs will diſcover them to be true Diamonds; ſo that a skilful Judg may find an Agreement betwixt thoſe things, which others take to be of different Natures.

And further, it hath ſeveral times been obſerved, that ſome things have been thought irreconcileable, when repreſented to the Underſtanding in the form of Propoſitions, and alſo when one of them is but a Notion or a Current Definition, ſeveral of theſe Notions containing or being equal to a Propoſition. As when a Circle is defined to be a figure contained in a Line, whoſe Parts are equally diſtant from the Centre; the Definition contains the Eſſential Property of a Circle, and is therefore diſtinguiſhed from that Conick Section called an Ellipſis, though that be a Figure terminated by a curve Line. And if a Man have not adequate Notions of what he Judges of, he may eaſily think thoſe things inconſiſtent, that are not ſo; for if one indifferently skilled in Mathematicks, ſhould hear one Man ſay, a particular figure was an Ellipſis, and another affirm it to be a Circle, he would think what they aſſerted inconſiſtent, knowing an Ellipſis to be a Conick Section, much different in Properties from a Circle; yet Dr. *Wallis* tells us, that the Vulgar Notions of Conick Sections are inadequate to the figures produced by them. For when a Cone is divided by an inclining plain, the Figures reſulting agree with the common Notion of an Ellipſis, the Diameters

meters being unequal in Length; yet if the Plane cut the Cone parallel to the Basis, that Conick Section will be a true Circle, having all it's Diameters equal. And not only Logicians, but Philosophers, mistake in Judging of the irreconcileableness of things often, for want of being acquainted with the Nature of the Things under consideration, which to another may appear consistent; and though one thing be well known, if the other be not, so that he knows not how to reconcile them, no wonder if he be at a loss to know how to admit or reject it. Thus if a Novice in Arithmetic finds according to his Rules no mean Proportional Number betwixt 4 and 32 he will scarce be able to reconcile that Propolition with the other, that there are two mean Proportionals, betwixt the same Numbers; whereas those that are acquainted with Geometrical Proportions will easily discern, that the Numbers 8 and 16 are mean Proportionals.

But to offer Instances of a less abstracted Nature; if a Philosopher or a Mathematician, unacquainted with the late Discoveries made by Telescopes, should hear one say, that the Moon is most enlightened when at the Full; & another that she is most enlightened when New, he would readily conclude the later not true, the Moon receiving her Light immediately from the Sun; yet he would not conclude so, if he knew the Earth enlightens the Moon as well as the Moon the Earth; for at the Full, she only receives those Beams, which pass directly from the Sun; whereas at the Change she both receives those from the Sun upon that side towards him, and also the Beams of the Sun reflected from the Earth to that Part of the Moon nearest us.

To which Inſtance, I ſhall add, that the Antients obſerving a bright Star preceded the riſing Sun, and alſo that after Sun-ſet another appeared that was none of the fixed ones; they concluded, that the Sun was attended by two bright Stars; but Pythagoras ſoon informed them otherwiſe. Now if one that only obſerved Venus in a Morning, ſhould aſſert, that beſides the ſix Planets, there was a ſeventh that preceded the Sun; and another on the contrary, that Heſperus was the ſeventh, an indifferent Perſon would think their Opinions irreconcileable to one another, or the Truth, which would make eight viſible Planets: yet Pythagoras ſhewed, that Venus produced both the *Phænomena*, determined by it's Motion near the Horizon at thoſe times; which ought to make us cautious how we reject Opinions as irreconcileable before well Examined.

From whence it appears, that when two Propoſitions are laid down, one of which is evinced by Experience, or Reaſon, and the other is Mathematically demonſtrated, or atteſted by Revelation, we ought to reject neither, becauſe we cannot reconcile them; but we ſhould rather conclude, that the collected Truth, was but gradual and limited; or that for want of underſtanding Privileged Truths better, we cannot ſee the agreement, which a higher Intellect may diſcern; and this is what all Practiſe in the Caſe of Divine Preſcience of Man's free Will.

An objection conſidered.

But perhaps it may be objected, that if we allow this, it will make us apt to be impoſed upon by bold dictating Men. But this Objection is taken away, if it be limited to thoſe Subjects it ought to be; for if neither of the Subject

jects be privileged, they ought to be examined by the Dictates of Reaſon. And if one of them be about a Privileged thing, it ought to be proved by Arguments ſufficient in it's kind; as in the Caſe of God's Preſcience of Man's free Will, though Men cannot reconcile them, yet they have thought fit to believe both Free Will and Preſcience; the former, as finding it in themſelves; and the later, as a Perfection which may reaſonably be allowed in a Being Infinitely Perfect; and partly, becauſe ſome Actions and Events, which flowed from Man's Free Will, were foretold by the Prophets. But in other Caſes, our Reaſon, and the Repugnancy of Propoſitions to known and manifeſt Truths, or their Agreement, ought to be the Criterion to diſtinguiſh Truth and Falſehood; for as Human Souls owe their Origin to God, as a Supreme Being and a free Agent, as he hath given Corporeal Beings Qualities of different Degrees of Nobleneſs; ſo he might give Intelligent Beings various Decrees of Capacities, as well as limit their Natures. And though it will not follow, that becauſe the Eye can diſcern ſmall Objects, and the Imagination conceive leſs, that we ſhall ever reach ſo ſmall a one as an Atom; ſo becauſe we may form Conceptions of Immaterial Beings, we ought not to conclude, that we ſhall be able to underſtand the Nature of God. A Boy may count one, two and three, though he underſtands not Arithmetick or Algebra; and ſo it is eaſy to underſtand ſome Truths, but to underſtand the Harmony of all is more difficult. So that God and Man ſeem to enjoy Truth, as differently as they do Time; for as we have

Time but by Parcels, and never come at moſt of it, ſo we diſcern ſome Truths, but are Ignorant of a great many more. Whereas God not only enjoys Eternity, but as Omniſcient knows all things at once, with their Harmony and Connection.

The Sixth and laſt Advice.

But to proceed to the ſixth and laſt Advice, *That in privileged things, we ought not always to condemn that Opinion which is liable to ill Conſequences, and incumbered with great inconveniences, provided the poſitive Proofs of it be ſufficient in their kind.* That this may the more readily be admitted, we ſhall ſuggeſt three things; *Firſt*, That poſitive Proofs according to the Nature of the things, are ſufficient to gain our Aſſent to a Propoſition; ſo that it is not neceſſary, the Intellect ſhould always take Notice of the Conſequences that may be deduced from it, or the Difficulties that attend it. This is evident in the Aſſents given to the Truth of Geometrical Demonſtrations; yet *Euclid* in all his Elements of Geometry, thinks Mathematical Demonſtration ſufficient, and his Propoſitions are received upon the Demonſtrations annexed to them, without minding the Sceptick *Sextus Empericus*, and others againſt the Aſſertors of aſſured Knowledg. The *ſecond* Conſideration is, that there are ſome things which our limited Knowledg cannot, or does not, comprehend; yet Men continue to dogmatize and frame Rules about ſuch things, as if they underſtood them well; ſo that if they were miſtaken, thoſe that judge by their Rules, muſt ſuppoſe the Propoſitions oppoſite to their Errors, liable to inſuperable Difficulties and Objections; from which two,

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a *Third* muſt follow, which is, that as it is not ſtrange, that privileged things, which are abſtruſe and ſublime, and above the Rules by which we judge of other things, ſhould be Subject to Objections, by thoſe that judge of them by the ſame Rules they do of other things; So we ought to be ſatisfyed with the Evidence of ſuch things, as there is poſitive Reaſon, worthy to be accepted.

But the Queſtion may be asked, whether that is worthy acceptance, which is liable to Objections and Inconveniences? does not *Euclid* employ the way of Reaſoning, which the Latin Interpreters call *Deductio ad abſurdum*? To which it may be anſwered, that beſides the more ſatisfactory way of Probation, he hath often made uſe of the Ἀπαγωγὴ juſt mentioned; yet he never alters his Method; and confining himſelf to Arguments drawn from Quantity, he offers nothing abſurd, but what is contrary to demonſtrated Truths, or ſome clear Definitions, Axioms, or Poſtulata, which he ſuppoſes already granted. But though he thus argues, that none can contradict him, without contradicting themſelves, yet he took no Pains to clear himſelf of ſome difficulties, which he muſt know would attend his Theorems, and demonſtrates the incommenſurableneſs of the ſide and Diagonal of a Square, without minding the Difficulties that attend the Diviſibility of a Line *ad infinitum*.

But though ſuch Objections as have been made, might hold in ordinary Caſes, yet peculiar ones deſerve a particular Conſideration. Indeed contradictory Opinions are, and may be, maintain'd about ſome privileged things. And as

as both cannot, one muſt be true, as Quantity muſt either be Diviſible *ad Infinitum* or not; and on both ſides there may be Objections ſcarce to be anſwered. And ſince one of them muſt be true, an Opinion muſt not needs be falſe, becauſe attended with Difficulties, or liable to Objections. And therefore, if the Proof on one ſide be clear and poſitive, though Difficulties may be offered, the Truth is not to be rejected; ſince thoſe Objections way ariſe from prepoſſeſſed Notions; or the Rules were not framed ſuitable to the Points diſputed; for from Truth nothing but Truth can be Legitimately inferred. So that the Proofs and Objections ought to be conſidered on both ſides, with regard to the moſt poſitive Arguments; for we may have a clear Proof of a thing exiſting, without knowing the manner of it; our Illative extending further than our Intuitive Knowledg. Yet we may Reaſon about things we do not underſtand, in anſwering Objections, that may be thought unanſwerable, becauſe they are not anſwered; for ſometimes by ſtating a Caſe like an Argument, we may ſhew the weakneſs of the Adverſary's Argument.

To what we have ſaid, we ſhall add one Obſervation, in reſpect of the Nature of the things we are diſcourſing of, which is, that we cannot hope to anſwer all Difficulties and Objections about privileged things, their Solution requiring a perfect comprehenſion of what is Infinite, as a Man cannot account for the Phaſes of the Moon, Eclipſes, Length of Days, *&c.* without underſtanding Coſmography. So that about privileged things, poſitive Proofs and Arguments ought to go a great way; and ſince in Diſputes, we may puzzle and perplex our limited Underſtandings.

THE

THE THEOLOGICAL WORKS Of the HONOURABLE *ROBERT BOYLE*, Esq; EPITOMIZED.

BOOK II.

PART II.

CHAP. I.

Containing Love and Religion, Demonstrated in the Martyrdom of Theodora and Didymus.

Theodora's Captivity and Didymus's Measures to retrieve Her.

THough to leave the Chast *Theodora* in so deplorable a Condition, may seem ill Natured; yet it may not be impardonable, if by that means we learn, the Methods attempted to rescue her. No doubt but *Didymus* was soon acquainted with

with their Barbarous Uſage; the Noiſe of ſo Illuſtrious a Lady ſounding in a Multitude of Ears, eſpecially one ſo much concerned as *Didymus*; The Wounds of Lovers affording ſecret paſſages for their Misfortunes, relating to that Paſſion: The unhappy Privilege of Wounded Men, informing them of the Approach of ill Weather by the Senſe of Pain, which ſound Bodies are free from.

Didymus then too well aſſured of his fair Miſtreſſes Diſtreſs, was too generous a Lover, not to hazard his Life for his Miſtreſſes Liberty; and was only concerned how to make ſo difficult an Attempt proſperous. To accompliſh his End he conſulted one of the Guards belonging to the Infamous Houſe of *Theodora*'s Confinement; who being a Fellow-Souldier in the *Roman* Armies, he hoped for the ſake of Vertue or *Didymus*, would be influenced to promote his Deſign. Wherefore with an obliging freedom, he addreſſed himſelf to his Commander, Generous *Septimius*, I eſteem it as the greateſt Advantage obtained by my hazard in the *Roman* Camps, that your Acquaintance made me happy there, and witneſs of your Bravery; which not only then raiſed an Emulation, but now gives me the Liberty to make a requeſt, which none but a Perſon of your Gallantry ought to be entruſted with, or would grant. Generous *Didymus*, replyed the *Roman*, I found ſo great a Satisfaction in your acquaintance, in purſuit of our Propitious Eagles, & your Examples ſuch ſtrong Incitements to Glory, that I prefered the Honour of being your Fellow-Soldier, more than that of a General. And my Ability to ſerve you, will abundantly

dantly reward all the hazards I was expoſed to. Tell me then in what Reſpect I may ſerve you; & as I am bold to think, that ſo vertuous a Friend as *Didymus*, will requeſt nothing but what was juſt; ſo he may depend upon any Service that is but dangerous.

Our Lover encouraged by this Declaration, with grateful acknowledgment thus proceeded; if you ever had the Happineſs of *Theodora's* Acquaintance, or a ſight of her, you would think any Character I can give her injurious. But if you have not, the time will only permit me to aſſure you, that her Perſon hath given me thoſe Sentiments of her Excellences, which I thought none of her Sex capable of; and even in Perſons indiſpoſed to ſuch Impreſſions, ſhe hath excited ſuch wonder and flames, as other Men could not eaſily be affected with, or perhaps, Womens Merits excite.

This admirable Perſon, exerciſing invincible Conſtancy to her Religion, as well as other Vertues; and refuſing to Sacrifice to *Venus*, *Flora*, or other Deities, whom her Perfections might exempt adoring, though her Religion did not, is by your Savage Preſident expoſed to publick Luſt. And thoſe Gallant *Romans*, whom you have gloriouſly led, ſuccesful in Battles, to conquer Kingdoms, and to enlarge both the Fame and Limits of the Empire, now captivate Innocent Vertue, and defend their brutiſh Raviſhers. By this you may gueſs my Requeſt is earneſt, that you would treat with thoſe you have moſt Intereſt in, that they may aſſiſt in the Reſcue of her, out of ſo Infamous a Priſon, and accept a greater Reward for a Handſom, than they could

could have from the Preſident, for a barbarous Action. All poſſible Care ſhall be taken to keep you from being endangered by her deliverance; nor can I expreſs how much the Obligation will heighten my Gratitude in ſome Proportion to your Favours. I know you love Gallant Actions for their own ſakes, and rather covet Debts of Gratitude than to be paid them; but give me leave to tell you, that the more ſpeedy your Aſſiſtance is, the more obliging and moſt likely to prove effectual; and let me further aſſure you, that what you do for *Theodora*, her Beauty and accompliſhed Vertue claim an undoubted Right to.

Says *Septimius*, with the ſame Freedom you own your Religion, I declare mine to be that of my Country, and my Anceſtors; worſhiping thoſe Gods, who have Crowned the *Romans* with Conqueſt and Univerſal Monarchy. But though I approve the Religion, I approve not the Preſidents Methods to promote it, ſuch Cruelty making the World ſuſpect, that Force is our beſt Argument. I had rather ſee the Temple with a few ſincere Votaries, than crouded with Diſſemblers, forced in by Inglorious Perſecutions. And though Terrors and Torments may affect the weaker ſort of Chriſtians, yet the reſolute deſpiſe them; and their Perſecutions rather ſtagger our own, than make thoſe unhappy Perſons Converts; Chriſtian Arguments having a weaker Effect in Religion's Cauſe, than Perſecutions againſt it. But the Deteſtable and Infamous Practice of our Preſident, makes him forfeit both the Reſpect, Pitty, and common Humanity owing to Women; nor can he think

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the Goddeſſes will be pleaſed with his diſfiguring their Images here below, with odious Blemiſhes; nor can gentle Deities like ſuch barbarous Worſhippers, who ſacrifices the Lives of Men, and the Vertue and Honour of Women; for thoſe that approve ſuch Sacrifices, are unworthy of any. Believe me, *Didymus*, it was againſt my Conſent, my Souldiers were ſo meanly employed, by this Inſolent Judg; had I been there, I ſhould have dared to correct his Inſolence. But without Paſſionate Expoſtulations, let us apply our ſelves to the ſpeedy reſcue of *Theodora*. For though I eſteemed Fame a Flatterer, yet your undeniable Teſtimony, as being your Miſtreſs, makes your reports of *Theodora* as unqueſtionable as the *Delphick* Oracles. I ſhall therefore prepare for the Reſcue of a diſtreſſed Beauty, and the ſervice of a generous Friend; & how much ſoever the Preſident or the Emperor may be provoked, you have truſted a Roman, who had rather be an Object than a Miniſter of Cruelty, and acceſſory in the Miſemployment of abſolute Power.

Septimius having ended thus, to prevent what *Didymus* was going to return, taking the Gallant Youth by the Hand, led him towards ſome of the Souldiers he moſt confided in, entertaining him by the way with the moſt likely expedients to promote his deſign. Having therefore ſent for two of his Souldiers, near the place where *Theodora* was brought, he Pathetically told them, how much *Didymus* was his Friend, and how Meritorious, repreſenting the Diſgrace of their Infamous Employment; and aſſured them of Rewards from *Didymus*, ſuitable to his Generoſity

nerosity and Liberality. Then withdrawing, he gave *Didymus* an Account of his Proceedings, and left him to compleat it, whose Native Liberality set not the least price on his Mistresse's Liberty, but with the Passion of a Lover offered more than *Septimius* had promised; nor would he have spared his Life to purchase *Theodora*'s Deliverance.

The Souldiers moved with the Affront from the President, their Love to their Commander, and *Didymus*'s profused Bounty, made them presently furnish him with a Souldier's Habit, prevailing with their Comrades, that he might have the first admittance into the Chamber; influencing on them partly with a share of their reward, and by representing him as a Person, who having been passionately in Love with, and scornfully used by her, was resolved at any rate to satisfy his Appetite and Revenge. And thus before the time was expired, which was allowed the disconsolate Virgin to comply with the Judg, her Lover gained admittance into her Chamber, who closing the Vizard of his Helmet, and thus not known by his Mistress, he had the Reception formerly mentioned.

Didimus *proposing* Theodoras's *escape she desires him to kill her.*

Though our disguised Lover, found his desolate Mistress, altered with sorrow and fears, which in some measure clouded her Beauty, yet her Looks were so Charming and Majestick, as to create a great deal of respect as well as pity. Wherefore with suitable gestures, without too near an approach, he told her, *Madam*, Let not the Habit I appear in, add to your other Troubles, the apprehension of a Rape, though I appear like a Ravisher: The Purity of *Theodora* is so

ſo great an Ornament to her ſelf as well as the Chriſtian Religion, that Heaven will not permit her to be robbed of the one, nor *Antioch* of the other. And therefore the Providence you have generouſly truſted in, hath ſent me to your Deliverance, which will be eaſily accompliſhed, if you pleaſe to diſguiſe your ſelf in this Military Habit. Be not ſolicitous of me who am under the ſame Providence, who will juſtify our relyance by your Eſcape. Nor do I doubt my retreat no more than my entrance; however it will be a ſatisfaction to pay my Duty where it was my deſire, and it will be a ſatisfaction to leave the World, by preſerving the moſt accompliſhed Perſon in it. And that you may the more readily accept this Offer, know that it is made by the now unfortunate *Didymus*, who thinks your acceptance more a Favour, than a Service, which carrys an Obligation along with it's Recompence.

The Name of *Didymus* and his Diſcourſe, diſſipated the Ladies Fears; knowing his Courage, Vertue and Love too well, to have grounds for them; and that any thing that was bold and hazardous might be expected from him; ſo that his attempt was both obliging and ſurprizing. Wherefore having compoſed her Thoughts, ſhe told him with Looks ſerene enough to let him know ſhe truſted him; Generous *Didymus*, this Action is ſo extraordinary, that to be inſenſible of it, would be as great Ingratitude; to own and reſcue an affronted Maid, with more hazard than would purchaſe Fame and Honour in the Roman Armies, in ſo diſintereſted, and an Action beyond Example, that

Words cannot celebrate, Merit deſerve, nor Power requite it. Nor can I forbear admiring ſo extaordinary an Effect of Vertue, ſhould tend to the deſtruction of it's Author. No, *Didymus*, it is ſufficient for Chriſtian Vertues to be puniſhed by the *Romans*, *Theodora* cannot be guilty of it, nor purchaſe a Life ſhe values as little as others do, at the Rate your Charity puts upon it; for thoſe that pitty me, would as much my Preſervation, ſhould the Price of a Heroe be payed for it, eſpecially ſhould I conſent to ſo great a loſs, which with publick Indignation, and my own Reproaches for my Ingratitude, would make my Life a Burthen, which you would preſerve as a Bleſſing at ſo dear a rate.

Here *Didymus* fearing *Theodora* might fruſtrate his deſign with ſome unfavourable Declaration, with great reſpect, thus interrupts her; Madam, let not your miſtaken Compaſſion be more cruel than the Severity of the *Romans*, which we Chriſtians think ſcarce poſſible. But they can but at once deſtroy, what you may make miſerable; think not my Services meritorious, becauſe offered in this place, and in your Sufferings; no, *Theadora*'s Prerogatives are able to make more worthy than I, ambitious to ſerve her, in the worſt of Circumſtances; whatever the *Romans*, who make Victory and Proſperity the ſtrongeſt Arguments to ſupport their Religion, may think of Sufferings for Conſcience ſake; Chriſtians, who adore their Saviour, *who took upon him the Form of a Servant*, and ſuffered betwixt two Thieves, as a Slave and Malefactor, ought not to let Perſecutions or Indignities

Indignities leſſen their juſt eſteem for thoſe that ſuffer for him, but follow his Examples, as well as acknowledg him at any rate. Nor, Madam, need you think your Misfortunes a diſhonour, ſince they are far otherwiſe in the Opinions of thoſe that can eſtimate things; ſince they look upon thoſe that are *impriſoned*, *deſtitute*, *tormented*, *affronted*, *&c.* for Religions ſake, worthy of Honour more glorious than the Panegyricks of Orators, or the Lawrels of Conquerors, ſince *the World was not worthy of them.* Such Judges will think *Venus* Infamous, though the *Romans* adore her; nor will they think the worſe of *Theodora* for being condemned for her Vertue. Honour, would be but of ſmall worth, nor the loſs worthy our concern, could we part with it without the loſs of Vertue; and much leſs ſhould the purſuit of Vertue forfeit it. Nothing can blemiſh Reputation more, than what is injurious to Religion, which juſtifys whatever Actions it impoſes. The Angels ſent to *Sodom* ſcrupled leſs to go thither, than to diſobey the Commands of him that ſent them there, nor could that abominable place pollute them; and in ſpite of the brutiſh Inhabitants, they preſerved their Angelical Purity.

Thus *Didymus* proceeded to conſolate the chaſt *Theodora*, who merited and enjoyed a ſpotleſs Reputation, aſſuring her, that her Affronts for her Conſtancy to Religion, had not leſſened her former eſteem for her Vertues amongſt impartial Judges; but he would not inſiſt long on a ſubject that might be uneaſy to her Modeſty; therefore paſſing to another Argument he told her, I ſay this Madam, to let you know

how little I can merit by the Duty I pay you, and conſequently, how eaſily you may accept my further Service, without which what I have done muſt be in vain. It was not without trouble and ſurprize that I heard of your Injuries, ſo that I could not but value your Safety above my own Life. There are Multitudes that undergo greater hazards than I do for deſpicable Conſiderations, and much leſs for to ſerve their Religion, and the faireſt Profeſſor of it. The *Roman* Camps are frequently recruited with ſuch Men as I, and Numbers would refuſe to ſupply their places, ſhould they ſee them fall in Breaches and Battles; but ſuch as are the Ornaments of Religion, and the Honour of their Sex, are ſo excellent and rare, that ſome Ages procure not one of them. Such Exemplary Ladys improve the Age they live in; the Reſpect and Love the World hath for them, makes their Counſels forcible, and the Lovelineſs of their Perſons adds ſplendor and influence to their Vertues; amongſt which *Theodora*'s Preſence makes her Eminent. But Madam, though ſuch Circumſtances as mine may make Men ſilent, yet they may be juſt; your Humility may vail your Vertues, but it will recommend and add a Luſtre to them in the Eyes of others. You need not therefore refuſe my Service, through an injurious Apprehenſion, that it is above reward; ſince the ſatisfaction and honour of doing ſo will be ſufficient. Here *Didymus* pauſing a while, &conſidering whether it was no prejudice to his Love, to own that that was not the Motive to his Service. However his affectionate deſire his Arguments ſhould prevail, to prevent

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an anſwer, made him proceed. Madam, ſays he, I muſt confeſs *Theodoras*'s Perfections have had the Influence on me, that might be expected on thoſe that conſidered them; and had Religion not been concerned in her misfortunes, and thoſe had been much greater, I could have run greater hazards for her deliverance; but thoſe Sentiments are not my preſent Motives only, which, were I poſſeſſed of a Crown, would lay that and my ſelf at your Feet, and ſhould think your acceptance more happineſs than all the reſt of the Enjoyments belonging to it; but, Madam, the Inducements that led me here, were the Charms of your Vertue, not your Beauty, which is ſo illuſtrious and ſhining, and your Piety and Conſtancy ſo unſhaken and exemplary, that were your Beauty but moderate, I ſhould think my ſelf unworthy Life, ſhould I not willingly part with it to ſave hers, who I knew would be more willing to loſe it; and by an exemplary Relyance on Providence, thought her ſelf engaged to anſwer to that uncommon & ſo intire a Truſt; but ſince ſhe hath done ſo much for Chriſt, I could never think I could do too much for her. And therefore, Madam, I hope and beg, that you will accept that Deliverance which Providence offers by a willing Hand, and make uſe of this Military Dreſs, to ſecure your own ſafety and my happineſs.

To this moving Addreſs, the fair Perſon made this anſwer, Generous *Didymus*, though your obliging Expreſſions have had the Influence they ought to have, yet they include an Inference different from what you would infer from them; ſince the more they diſcover of your

Gallantry, the more they ſhew what loſs the World would ſuſtain by being deprived of ſo much Vertue, and what a Fault it would be in me to be acceſſary. It would be a Reflection on me as well as your ſelf, to think your exceſſive Complements otherwiſe than ſuch, and therefore I muſt not pretend to anſwer them. But in reference to the ſerious part of your diſcourſe, I ſhall freely acquaint you with the ſtate of my Caſe, and what Intentions it ſuggeſted. When the inhuman Preſident had enjoyned me to Sacrifice to Idols, or to be confined in this infamous Place, I was in no ſmall Perplexity and Agony, for Death was thought too mild an Agony. The Infamy of the Place filled me with horror and indignation; and not only my Sex and Breeding, but the Dictates of Vertue, Modeſty and Chaſtity, increaſed my Abhorrence; I remembred my Vows to God were without Exceptions or Reſerve, and that I worſhipped a perſecuted and affronted Redeemer, having ſuffered more for my ſake than I could for his, ſince he not only *endured the Croſs, but deſpiſed the Shame*, which the Malice of the *Jews*, and the *Roman* Inſolence affixed to it. And Providence I thought had given me an Opportunity to ſhew, that I could do more than Dye for Chriſt. But various Thoughts diſtracted my Mind, and to what was propoſed to me, I was obliged to anſwer, that I could accept of neither one nor the other, but this deteſtable place was ſoon choſe for me. I was at the firſt ſo confounded, I ſcarce knew, what to think, or what I did; only I remembred, that Idolatry was repreſented in Scripture as Odious,

and

and Spiritual Fornication: and as Apoſtacy would be my own fault, the Puniſhment for refuſing would be anothers. And remembring my ſelf a Daughter of him, who againſt hope believed in hope, and followed *God's call, I obeyed, not knowing whither I went*, the Dictates of my Conſcience directing me to follow an infallible Guide.

But Tears and Inevitable Diſcompoſures interrupted the Chaſt Virgins Diſcourſe, which being ſuppreſſed ſhe thus proceeded; with theſe Thoughts I entered this Infamous Place. And being ſometime left alone, to ſee if my Mind would alter, the hideous approach of what I was to endure made me think of the Sanctuary of Death for my refuge, and to drown both my diſmal Fears, and my Perſecutors hopes in my untainted Blood; but reflecting on the Unlawfulneſs of ſelf-Murther, I conſidered that God who made ſelf-Love the ſtandard of that to our Neighbours, commanding us not to deſtroy the Life of another, muſt be more forcible againſt any Violence offered to our ſelves. And if Patricide be one of the blackeſt Crimes, which is the neareſt relation, how much greater muſt it be, where Perſonality leaves no diſtance of Relation. God Almighty having employed us in his Service, without a breach of Duty, we cannot quit it, till the Errand be done, which is to glorify him by our Lives, till his Commands, or Loyalty to Truth, aſſure us, that we ſhall glolify him more by our Death. Theſe Thoughts would have prevented me from ending my Life with a Crime, but the want of Inſtruments was ſufficient. Wherefore remembring, that *Daniel*

was preſerved in the Lyons Den, and that his Friends were delivered from the fiery Furnace, when caſt into it: and knowing by Example, that no Succours can come too late, when God deſigns Deliverance; I made uſe of Prayer, as the moſt hopeful and innocent courſe; imploring him, though with the Loſs of my Life to preſerve my Purity, which by his Grace was hitherto preſerved vvithout ſpot, your Entrance bringing me a return of thoſe Prayers, which were ſcarce expreſſed. Judge then, Generous *Didymus*, how your brave and ſeaſonable Attempt hath delivered me out of it.

Madam, ſays *Didymus*, I thought it as much my Duty, as the opportunity makes it my Happineſs, to ſerve ſo bright a Vertue, and if you pleaſe to let me have the Honour and Happineſs of finiſhing what I have begun, it will be a greater ſatisfaction than if I had reſcued a Roman General, or been made one my ſelf, for the Action.

When Merit purchaſes Thanks, the diſclaiming of them does not forfeit, but increaſe it, replys *Theodora*, nor need you give me more aſſurances of your Vertue and Friendſhip, ſince to doubt of them, would make me unworthy of their reality and greatneſs. The Circumſtances of your Attempt ſhew the Generouſneſs and Nobleneſs of your Aim; and therefore I ſhall venture a requeſt, when I have informed you of the Reaſons it is grounded on.

Didymus tranſported with her Declaration, was going to aſſure her, it would be joyful to him to ſerve or obey her in any thing, when ſhe thus prevented him with a continuance of her

Diſcourſe.

Diſcourſe. You know *Didymus*, that Virgins have Authority to oppoſe the Endeavours of Monarchs in defence of their Chaſtity; and ſince Purity may be preſerved by uncommon ways, if no other will ſerve; tho' I think not Self-Murther lawful, yet Death may be required from anothers hand, and Heaven, to eſcape defilement, ſeems to approve it. Though the Prophet *Jonas* thought it unlawful to drown himſelf, yet he commanded his Fellow-Sailors to caſt him bound into the Sea, *Jonah* 1.12. when none of them could expect to live long. Wherefore to compleat what you have begun, lend me your Arm and Sword, to prevent by a ſuddain Death a greater Evil. The *Romans* will believe Reſiſtance provoked you to revenge, nor are they likely to be much offended at it: And thus you will have the Title of *Theodora*'s Deliverer from the greateſt Calamity and Danger; nor will this debar me of the Honour of Martyrdom; St. *John*, becauſe his Zeal for Religion occaſioned Perſecutions, which terminated in his Death, though he was privately beheaded in a Priſon, was eſteemed a Martyr; and if one willingly ſuffers Death, for Truth or Religion's ſake; there needs not a Scaffold or a Stake or publick Execution, to make a Martyr. Beſides, ſince the Perſecutions are likely to continue long, an Eſcape would be but a ſmall Reprieve from what I am reſolved not to avoid, and what would make them more uneaſy would be, that I endeavoured to do ſo, eſpecially by ſo mean a way, as criminally to conſent to the Loſs of ſo excellent a Perſon, that hath generouſly expoſed himſelf for my Deliverance. Deny not therefore, ſays

ſays *Theodora*, with Tears in her Eyes, my laſt requeſt; and with one Thruſt of your Sword, perfect my Deliverance: and without ſtaining it with the Blood of my Deliverer, free me from the danger of Diſhonour, and your ſelf from that of Torment, and by one Act of Friendſhip, ſecure my Virginity, and crown my Martyrdom.

The Concluſion of this Diſcourſe moved both Surprize and Trouble, and as ſoon as his Aſtoniſhment would permit, ſays *Didymus*. Ah! what hath induced you to propoſe ſuch a Queſtion to the Unfortunate *Didymus*: That I ſhould deſtroy the Life I came to ſave and reſcue; and that *Didymus* ſhould embrew his hands in that Blood, to ſave a Drop of which he would forfeit all his own. As your Piety may be a Pattern for future Ages, ſo I doubt not but your Memory will ſhine as bright as your Vertue and your Eyes doe now; and how hideous a Monſter ſhould I appear, who inſtead of your Deliverer proved your Murtherer, for my own Preſervation? May I tell you, your Generoſity hath made you forget ſome of your other Vertues, and the Dictates of Religion you have adorned; ſince your Commands, if obeyed, would involve me in a Crime, and make your ſelf more than an Acceſſory. If you acknowledg Self-Murther unlawful, how can your Commands juſtify me to take away a Life you have not Power to diſpoſe of? And how can I excuſe, without Authority, the deſtroying the Life of an Innocent Perſon? But *Madam*, ſince I am obliged to diſobey what I ſhould otherwiſe be unwilling, the Commands of *Theodora*, ſuch an Action would be inexcuſe-

able

able in both of us; for as *Adam* ſinned in being prevailed on to do it by her, who was firſt in the Transgreſſion, and the Jewiſh Prophet was torn in pieces by a Lion, for being ſeduced by the Perſwaſions of a Prophet, ſo *David* was ſaid to be guilty of Murther for killing *Uria* by the hands of the Children of *Ammon*; and the Children of *Iſrael* were plagued in the Wilderneſe, becauſe *they made the Calf that Aaron made.* And indeed, whatever may be the Motive, the guilt of Innocent Blood will lye upon them that occaſioned the ſpilling of it. But ſince Chriſtians are not only exhorted, but commanded to lay down their Lives for one another, the high eſteem I have for yours, may make the Offer of my Service lawful, which you cannot lawfully refuſe, ſince that is the only innocent way of eſcaping your Danger: And I know not but that it may contract the guilt of Self-Murther, to refuſe the proper means of Safety. Pardon me, *Madam*, if the reſpect I have for *Theodora*, hath made me take a greater Liberty than I ſhould upon another occaſion. And ſince I perceive, your Generoſity, and what your Humility perſwades you to think Gratitude, make you concerned for a Life hazarded for your ſake, this will not ſecure my Safety; for ſhould I be condemned by your cruel Commands to leave you to the Rudeneſs of bruitiſh Satyrs, to miſs the Honour of *Theodora*'s Deliverance, will give me greater Torments than the *Romans* can inflict. And I muſt further add, that ſome Sentiments have ſo faſt tyed together your Welfare and my Happineſs, that your Safety and my Soul are equally neceſſary to my Life: Nor fancy, *Madam*, that

that the Thought of the Unlawfulneſs will ſecure my Life; for he that is weary of it may procure Death without a Sword or Poiſon, ſince Paſſion moved to a degree may do it, inſtead of either of them. And as Joy in exceſs hath proved deſtructive; why may not thoſe more violent ones of Grief, Shame and Indignation produce as fatal Effects? And to ſhew you, vvhy I ought not to obey the Dictates of your Generoſity, let me—But before he could add his reaſons, an Alarm vvithout, made him fear the Patience of thoſe that waited; and therefore with a Countenance as Petitioning as his Eyes and Words, his Courage ſcarce forbearing Tears, he thus addreſſes himſelf to *Theodora*; *Madam*, how long upon groundleſs Scruples, will you neglect an Opportunity irreparable, and how can you juſtify ſlighting the means of Providence for your Safety, to God Almighty. Ah! *Madam*, at once regain your Liberty, ſecure your Honour and your Life. And if nothing on your own Account will do it, do it as a reward of my Services, and once let me rather ſerve than obey. Be not ſolicitous for me; the World will not blame a ſpotleſs Virgin for preſerving her ſelf ſo, nor think it Ingratitude to grant her Servant a recompence, which he is ambitious to venture his Life for. In ſhort, *Madam*, If your Cruelty vvill not permit me to ſave your Life, Grief and other Paſſions vvill end mine, and vvould it not be a much greater happineſs, that *Didymus* ſhould dye for ſaving, than looſing *Theodora*.

Upon

Upon theſe Pathetick Words, he retired to a Corner of the Room, and diveſting himſelf, offered his Military Habit to *Theodora* upon his knee: Upon which conſidering the Error, which ſhe had made in perſuading him to kill her, and the noiſe in the next room letting her know ſhe had no long time to deliberate, ſhe with Bluſhes and Silence, as a Token of her conſent, received the Preſent, by raiſing him and taking it out of his hand. And to his Joy (which the Fatal conſequences could not hinder from being great) he directed her and aſſiſted to put it on, uſing all poſſible Care not to diſtreſs her great Modeſty; which when he had done with all the reſpect and decency the place would permit, what ſhe needed not his Aſſiſtance in, he give her Liberty to do her ſelf, withdrawing to a part of the room out of ſight, to prevent thoſe dangers that might threaten internal Chaſtity, tho' thoſe Perſons, that take the greateſt care to avoid Temptations are commonly the moſt able to reſiſt them.

Theodora at laſt changes Habits with Didymus and eſcapes to Irene's Houſe.

As ſoon as exchange of Dreſſes had made it decent for them to converſe together, the diſguiſed Virgin covered with Bluſhes, with obliging Looks, thus addreſſed her Benefactor. If your Reaſons, ſays ſhe, had not convinced me, that Death could not relieve me without a Crime, and that without Death I could not decline what I have ſeverer Apprehenſions of than Death, Diſhonour, I could not accept your Generous Proffer, nor leave you in a danger, which your Zeal for Religion and Concern for me, hath engaged you in. And I doubt not but the Charity which moved you to this Generous Offer,

fer, and preſſed me to accept it, will make your Pardon a fault; which your own Importunities have been acceſſory to; ſince a Tenderneſs of Honour and Abhorrency of Defilement, are ſuch Motives as may excuſe a Virgin what is required of her. And indeed your carriage in this Tranſaction hath left me no room to doubt of the Purity and Diſintereſtedneſs of your Intentions, which confirms my Opinion, that Vertue may inſpire as Noble Enterpriſes as Paſſion. I know your aim in what you have done; you expected higher Retributions than my Condition will be able to make; yet I am not inſenſible of your Heroick Acts of Vertue and Friendſhip; and your Merit and Favours have raiſed that eſteem and thoſe juſt ſentiments, which they ought to have in a Perſon, who both diſcerns and values them. And if a diſconſolate Virgin's Prayers may prevail at the Throne of Grace, they will procure you Bleſſings ſuitable to your Generoſity, and as laſting as my Sence of them can be; and you will long enjoy the Glory of your meritorious hazards; or will find ſo much Happineſs in your Sufferings, by the conſolations reſerved for a Perſecuted Condition, as Manna was vouchſafed to the *Iſraelites*, in their Exile in the Wilderneſs. The Prayers that have been ſo ſucceſsful in my Deliverance, I hope will be no leſs propitious in your behalf: But if your Charity ſhould expoſe you to further Danger, your Generoſity hath ſhewn me an Example, nor would I have left you expoſed on my Account, for to ſhun any Danger that only threatned my Life.

And

And now the mournful Virgin being to take in all probability her laſt Farewel, with a change of Countenance and Tone of Voice and a Multitude of Tears, which expreſſed her Concern for him more than Words, ſhe made uſe of the following Words: Farewel, my Generous Deliverer, and may that God, who is witneſs of my reluctancy, free you from your Danger, and recompence that Charity, which hath led you into it. And I hope, if not on Earth, we ſhall have a joyful Meeting in Heaven, which both my Deliverance and the Inſtrument of it may contribute to, ſince I am not delivered by an Ordinary Perſon, but the moſt Generous of Men.

Madam, replys *Didymus*, your unequalled Perfections, and your good Wiſhes, make me more happy than your Humility will give you leave to be aware of. And you have too much Merit, to let my Services have a Title to any; and what I have done, is what every brave Man in *Antioch* ought to endeavour. But if your Goodneſs will think I deſerve another recompence, beſides what your ſafety affords me; allow the Memory of me a place in your Thoughts, yet without any troubleſom Degree of Pity, ſince my Condition will need none, and the *Idea* would be much unlike the Original, ſhould it diſquiet whom it came to ſerve. But, Madam, for *Theodora*'s Safety, I muſt preſs her departure, tho' I deny my ſelf the Happineſs of her Company, leaſt any thing ſhould prevent it. And then with a change of Countenance, which his Courage could not conceal, farewel, ſays he, *Theodora*, long may you continue the Ornament and

Example

Example of your Sex. And as ſome Fruits may be preſerved by ſweet things as well as others in brine and vinegar; ſo may your Vertue remain, but the Objects of it be altered; and may Proſperity give you an Opportunity of exerciſing Moderation and Gratitude, inſtead of Courage and Patience. Once more, *Theodora* farewel, and may your Life be as full of Contentment, as my Sufferings will be ſatisfactory.

Though theſe Pathetick Expreſſions ſenſibly affected ſo grateful a Perſon as *Theodora*, yet ſhe thought it not amiſs to follow her Lovers Advice, which he was ſo earneſt to have her embrace, and therefore bidding him farewel, with a Look full of Sorrow and Gratitude, ſhe diſpoſed her ſelf to quit the Place. Which ſhews, that a great Mind may diſcover it ſelf in whatever ſtation it acts in; for whilſt in the Temple of *Antioch*, Whores, as *Venus* and *Flora*, and Raviſhers, as *Jupiter and Mars*, were adored, in a Place dedicated to their Luſt and Violence, Chaſtity was exerciſed, and Martyrdom contended for.

When once ſhe ventured into the outward Room, Providence, to whom ſhe had truſted her Virgin Purity, aſſiſted to compleat her Reſcue; and whilſt the Ruffians were contending who ſhould ſucceed *Didymus*, they conveighed her out the moſt private ways to *Irene's* Houſe, which happened to be nearer than her own.

There her Friends were met to lament her Captivity, and to pray to God to contribute to her Reſcue; and as their Prayers were zealous, ſo they were not a little ſurprized when they ſaw a Souldier at the Door, who would not eaſily

ſily have gained admittance, had they not took it to be *Didymus*, coming to offer his Service in the Reſcue of *Theodora*; but you cannot imagin the Wonder and Joy when they diſcovered it to be *Theodora* her ſelf, whoſe Dreſs and Beauty, had the *Romans* diſcovered her, would have made her paſs for their *Pallas*. And though the dreſs was not ſuitable to a Virgin, yet it well became ſo great and chaſt a Conqueror.

Irene was not a little tranſported as well as ſurprized with her unexpected Appearance, and after a thouſand Gratulations and Careſſes, deſired to know the manner of her Deliverance. Upon which, ſhe gave them a full Account of the Proceedings, from the time ſhe went before the Preſident, till her Deliverance, concluding, that as what ſhe had done was not unbecoming a Chriſtian, and was by the aſſiſtance of God's Grace; ſo Providence made uſe of the Vertue and Generoſity of *Didymus* for her Deliverance. The Company than began to return Thanks to Divine Providence, celebrating the happy Inſtrument of it, ſtriving who ſhould moſt commend ſo venterſom and diſintereſted a Lover; which *Theodora* no doubt joyned her Aſſent to; for though her Modeſty reſtrained the declaration of her Sentiments, otherwiſe than by her candid deportment, and the account ſhe gave of his Proceedings, the Hiſtory of that was a ſufficient Panegyrick of him. After the Company was ſatisfyed with what *Theodora* told them, and deſired a Gentleman acquainted with *Didymus*, to acquaint him with what had happened, and what was likely to befal him; The Ladies retired to *Irene's* Apartment,

where the Excellent *Theodora* having returned thanks to the Author of her Deliverance, ſhe was accommodated with Cloaths fit for her Sex. Nor was it difficult to fit a Perſon ſo well ſhaped, and to whom any dreſs might be graceful; ſhe uſed to pity the Vanity of ſuch Ladies, who were obliged to the Taylor or a Dreſſer, and looked not ſo much upon what they are, as what Cloaths they wear; and tho' ſhe did not decline faſhionable Cloaths, yet ſhe neither ſtood in need of, nor valued thoſe Ornaments, which were beyond the Limits of modeſt Decency.

Irene *ſollicits* Theodoras *Favour for* Didymus, *who declares her averſion for Marriage.*

In the mean while *Irene's* kindneſs for *Didymus*, moved her to do what good Offices ſhe could for her abſent Friend, and therefore diſcourſing of his late Performances, ſays ſhe, now *Madam*, I hope you are convinced of my Couſin's Vertue, and that his Merit more than my Friendſhip hath demonſtrated the Ardency of his Flame. Should I not acknowledg his Generoſity, ſays *Theodora*, I ſhould be very ungrateful, and as his Obligations could not be greater, ſo they could not be more handſom.

I know, ſays *Irene*, that *Didymus*, may chooſe whom he would make happy in *Antioch*, and tho' your Perfections are admirable, yet much leſs Beauty hath given the Poſſeſſors a ſhare in the Imperial Throne, and placed them upon the *Roman* Altars; but ſince I have the Honour to know you value both Piety and Vertue, and a flame excited by them above the advantages that influence meaner Spirits; I know not who could deſerve a greater ſhare in *Theodoras's* Favour, than one that hath ſhewn the Ardency, Purity and Diſintereſtedneſs, of his Flame. Had

Had I not been ſurprized, ſays *Theodora*, at the beginning of your Diſcourſe, I ſhould have prevented it, and lamented my Infelicity, which is in my Opinion the greateſt, to be flattered by a Friend, flattery ſeeming inconſiſtent with true Friendſhip; and I could eaſily return *Irene's* Complements, by the approbation of the beſt Judges in *Antioch*, if I could imitate what I do not approve; but skin deep Beauty is not ſo great a Bleſſing as it is an applauſed one; for Accidents may, and Time will, ruin the beſt of Faces, and perhaps ſcarce leave any Marks of that Beauty. Indeed vain Men are apt to ſay too much of the Beauties they adore, their Paſſion overcoming their Reaſon; but though they mean what they ſay of thoſe they repreſent as Goddeſſes, yet a conſiderate Perſon will ſcarce be proud of a Title, from thoſe that think a few Colours and Features ſufficient to make a Deity. Great Beauty expoſes the Owners to extraordinary Troubles, either through Envy of thoſe that want it, or Importunities of thoſe that court it; and without caution, which makes it troubleſom, it often happens a Temptation to thoſe that admire it, and a Snare to the Poſſeſſors of it. And had I the Vanity to believe Beauty a rich Perfume, though it be grateful to moſt, and delightful to the Owner, yet it often diſcompoſes Strangers and her beſt Friends, and frequently diſorders her ſelf by caſting her into Fits of the Mother. I beg *Theodora's* Pardon, and thought I could not be guilty of Flattery ſo near a good Witneſs of more than I ſay, pointing at a Looking-Glaſs; indeed the Admiration of every Gazer, is a thing leſs deſireable than deſired, and extorts more Praiſe,

than it affords Happineſs; and had I the folly to believe what I am flattered with, I ſhould not be fond of that Quality which would add to the frailties I am already guilty of; and which makes Ladies ſo miſchievous, that it robs their Lovers of their Quiet, though not of their Innocency; therefore I confeſs, ſays *Irene*, it was a fault to inſiſt on the Praiſes of a Face, attended with other Beauties of a nobler kind; but what I ſaid was, to let *Theodora* know what Favour it was I asked for my Friend, when I deſired him an Intereſt in her Favour. And I am the more in hopes of ſucceſs, ſince the Favours I ask, are for an abſent Friend, who cannot now ſpeak for himſelf, and who refuſed to make any requeſt for himſelf, when his ſervices were ſo uſeful. His ſilence on me had more Succeſs, than Solicitations could have at ſuch a time; but what you deſire for him, I conceive to be of ſuch concern, that it requires a more convenient time, and more calmneſs to diſcourſe of it. For Marriage is one of the moſt important Things of Life, and though I eſteem it a mean Notion of Happineſs, to think that one Perſon can make either of them the Portion of another, yet Diſcretion, as well as Sincerity and Chaſtity, oblige a Woman to have a great deal of Care of that which concerns the Term of her Life; and a Woman that deſigns to behave her ſelf like a wife, ought to take care in a Choice ſhe can make but once, and not careleſsly to enter on a Voyage where Shipwracks are ſo frequent, though ſhe be offered a fine Ship to make it in. But ſince my Dear *Irene* takes this opportunity to know more of my Thoughts, than I ſhould diſcloſe to any other Perſon, I muſt tell her, that

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were I at my own diſpoſal, and ſhould be willing to make ſuch a Change as I have always been averſe to, *Didymus*'s Vertues and Services would influence me more than the Advantages of Titles, Riches or Dignities of his Rivals could. But Dear *Irene*, the times are ſuch, and my Circumſtances too, that it would be very extravagant for me to engage my ſelf further in the World. For a Chriſtian cannot think to be happy, whilſt the Church is miſerable, and perplexed with outward Calamities. When Idolatry and Perſecution over-run the Empire, and Raviſhers and Whores are adored in their Temples, and the Worſhippers of the True God are Perſecuted and Purſued even into Corners; and ſuch as God declares *the World is not worthy of*, *Heb.* 11. 38. are treated as if not worthy to live in the World, but are daily expoſed to Ignominy and Torments. When I think, proceeds *Theodora*, of the Churches Deſolation, and that I ſhould not only be content to be a Spectator, but an Actor in the Trajedy, I cannot reliſh the Complements of a Lover, nor hope for Contentment, except from a Place above the reach of Perſecution. And theſe Sentiments, ſays ſhe, are warranted by the Apoſtle, who Diſcouraged Women that were free, in much leſs troubleſom times, from entring into a Marriage State. Yet *Madam*, ſays *Irene*, the Conjugal Expreſſions of Friendſhip, are not only allowable but commendable, and are Duties of Piety and Vertue. I deny not that, ſays *Theodora*, but eſteem what you mention rather as a diſſwaſive from ſuch a State of Life; for were I to enter into it, I ſhould re-

ſolve to do all that I could becoming it, and in ſuch times that could not be done, without involving my ſelf further in the World, than I am now concerned in it; ſince I ſhould be in as much fear for ſuch a Friends ſafety as my own. And as I now could be content to quit the World without regret, that advantage would be loſt, by an uneaſineſs to part with that, which Duty and Inclination would tye me to. And the Apoſtle clearly intimates, that to continue in a Virgin State in the time of Perſecution, gives them the opportunity of ſerving God the more Serenely, and of being employed in the Comtemplation of ſo Sublime a Subject, without ſtooping to one Inferior. And though the Duties of a Relation may engage part of our time and care; yet why ſhould we engage our ſelves in ſo unneceſſary Diſtractions?

Notwithſtanding *Theodora*'s Reaſons; yet *Irene* could not forbear ſpeaking further in Favour of her abſent Friend; ſaying, ſhall not the Unhappy and Faithful *Didymus*, when theſe unfortunate Storms are blown over, hope for a particular ſhare in the Joy and Tranquility, and that his ſufferings ſhall end with the Churches Perſecutions, and that theſe Reſolutions ſo deſtructive to his Happineſs, ſhall end with the Occaſion of them; and that *Theodora*'s will not be more laſting than the *Roman* Cruelty.

Alas *Irene*, ſays *Theodora*, how unſeaſonable is it to talk of thoſe things, which we may never live to ſee; for I am ſo far from flattering my ſelf with thoſe happy Days, that I ſhould not be ſurprized, if this was my laſt; and were

I to paſs out of this, into that ſtate, that Condition of Life will have no place, but will be ſucceeded with an Angelical one. where both our Friendſhips and Perſons will be transfigured, and be much more perfect than they now are.

Theodora *reſolves to attempt* Didymus's *Reſcue.*

Theodora had ſcarce ended, when a Meſſenger brought them news, which occaſioned them to return to their Company; where the Sadneſs of the Meſſenger's Looks gave them reaſon to expect an unwelcom Meſſage; the Subſtance of which was, that when the Preſident heard of *Theodora*'s Eſcape, though he was ſolicited to proſecute her no further, yet he ſolemnly declared, that if ever he could get her again in his Power, he would reclaim her not by the Fear of Infamy but Death, ſuppoſing ſhe would not fly from an Altar to a Scaffold or a Stake, reſolving if ſhe were obſtinate, to ſacrifice her to the Indignation of the Deities, ſhe had thus provoked.

As to what related to *Didymus*, *Theodora* heard it not without ſuch Concern, as evidently diſcovered it ſelf in her countenance, by ſeveral changes of Colour; the Reſult of her Concern for her diſtreſſed Lover; but when the Meſſenger had finiſhed that part of his Diſcourſe, which related to her ſelf, though the Auditors were affected with Horror and Grief, *Theodora* ſeemed to take courage, her Sadneſs being ſucceeded with Tokens of Joy; and whilſt the reſt were reflecting on the Melancholly Account, *Irene* could not forbear asking *Theodora*, the reaſon of that pleaſant Change. To which *Theodora* anſwered: Whilſt I was thinking of *Didy-*

mus his Reſcue, I could not but be concerned at the Danger, I ſhould be expoſed to; of being ſent back to that Infamous Place, whence *Didymus* had reſcued me, but ſince the Judg hath tyed his hands, and cleared me; from the fear of Infamy, no wonder I ſhould be joyful, that I may exerciſe my Gratitude without the hazard of my Honour.

What *Theodora*! ſays *Irene*, do you value your Deliverance ſo little, that though an hour ago you gave thanks for it; now will you ruſh into greater Dangers. I ſhall never, ſays *Theodora*, forget that admirable Reſcue; but the greateſt part of that, Deliverance I take to be my Deliverance from Diſhonour; and ſhould much leſs value it, if it debarred me from the directeſt way to Glory; and if to preſerve my Purity, it ſhould condemn me to Ingratitude, to the Inſtrument of my Preſervation.

Our Lives, ſays *Irene*, being not only truſted but vouchſafed to us by God, are not at our own Diſpoſal, and we not only quit them, when we are guilty of Self-Murther, but when we purſue thoſe things which bring us to an untimely end. Says *Theodora*, I believe we are rather as Stewards, than ſole Proprietors of our Lives, and that Actions that are not direct, may criminally tend to Deſtruction; but the Care of our Lives is not indiſpenſably committed to us, as of our Souls, ſo that it may not be lawful for us upon any Terms to looſe them; for though Life is carefully to be preſerved, yet it is intruſted in order to a Condition better than it ſelf; and if Vertue or Religion be concerned, to part with it, is rather our Duty.

ty. And I take this, ſays *Theodora*, to be my Caſe, Faithfulneſs to a Promiſe, and Gratitude to a Benefactor obliging me to ſecure the Life of an innocent Perſon, who hath hazarded his Life on my Account, and reſcued me from a greater Danger.

But ſays *Irene*, ſuppoſe you are more likely to hazard your ſelf than to relieve *Didymus*; for the barbarous Judg is ſo much incenſed againſt all Chriſtians, and eſpecially againſt you, for your eſcape, and him as the Author of it, that he will be glad to deſtroy you both; and thus inſtead of preſerving, you will deſtroy another Ornament of the Church of *Antioch*, which your early and exemplary Vertue may continue to it.

This Days Experience, ſays *Theodora*, forbids me to diſtruſt Divine Providence, nor do I doubt of my meaſures to reſcue *Didymus* being ſucceſsful; if God Almighty ſhall think it leſs our privilege to be reprieved than crowned, without reſpect therefore to Events, I ought to purſue what God hath laid in my Power; and therefore it is my Duty, by Promiſe as well as Gratitude, at leaſt to attempt *Didymus*'s reſcue. Could I think indeed, that the Church of *Antioch* were much concerned in a Perſon of my Sex and Frailties, this Attempt might make my Life ſignificant; for though our Adverſaries think all we do for Chriſtianity, as the Effect of ſuperſtitious Frenzy, my expoſing my ſelf, Ingratitude being eſteemed by them a Moral Vertue, may convince them, that we have a general Love to Vertue; ſince Chriſtians can part with their Lives to avoid Ingratitude as well as Idolatry.

Gratitude

Gratitude, replys *Irene*, is only a relative thing, and Benefits received ought to be requited, by Actions acceptable to thoſe they are to gratify, but not by ſuch as will be unwelcome; and therefore the faithfulleſt of your Servants will be more unhappy, than the *Romans* can make him, if what he hath done cannot convince you, that nothing can be a Favour or Retribution, which may deſtroy his adored Miſtreſs.

I doubt not, ſays *Theodora*, but *Didymus* is ſenſible of the higheſt Sentiments of Generoſity and Friendſhip; yet is too juſt to diſallow one he loves from aſpiring to ſuch worthy Qualities, where I am to conſider, not ſo much what his Vertue will reliſh, as what his Caſe requires; and a Debt is owing to him, which ought the more freely to be paid, as it is frankly remitted.

Irene finding words unſucceſsful, with Tears addreſſed *Theodora*. *Madam*, ſays ſhe, if you will have none on *Theodora*, have ſome compaſſion on diſconſolate *Irene*; and if her Arguments will not, let her Tears prevail. And as I have had the Honour of your Friendſhip, and the Happineſs of your Converſation, if you deny me now, you will turn my Happineſs into Infelicity, ſince the deſolate *Irene* cannot live in a World, deprived of *Theodora*.

Theodora, who was more tender of her Friends Sufferings than her own, *Irene*'s Expreſſions and Tears ſo much affected her, that though what ſhe foreſaw, did not ſurprize her, ſhe could not but be concerned, at the other difficulties ſhe was to conquer; however after a ſhort Conflict betwixt her Tenderneſs and Reſolution, at the laſt

laſt ſhe made this Anſwer, Dear *Irene*, whilſt you reproach me, exerciſe not Cruelty your ſelf, nor add to the Concern of Parting with *Irene*, the ſeeing her troubled on my Account, nor put me upon the uneaſie Task of denying her Requeſts. If what I owe to Religion and *Didymus* would permit, your Arguments might be ſpared; but vertuous Friends are not to be obliged to prejudice Conſcience and Reputation. I take Vertue to have a greater ſhare in making our Friendſhip, than Sympathy and Inclination; and what is grounded on Vertue, ought to be regulated by it. Let me therefore as a Friend, inform you, that in the circumſtances we labour under, we ought not only to conſider that we are Friends, but Chriſtians likewiſe; who ought to hearken to the Apoſtle, who forbids us upon the removal of our Friends, to give *up our ſelves to ſorrow, as thoſe that have no hope*, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 13. Indeed, if like the *Epicureans*, we believed the Soul as Mortal as the Body, or like the Pagans, we buryed the hopes of Friends in the Grave, we might deplore a ſeparation that was likely to be Eternal. But through the Goodneſs of God, being inſtructed by the Goſpel, and being enabled to live according to it, and to be ready to dye in it's defence, we need not fear, that the time of our Separation will bear any proportion to that of Eternity, wherein we ſhall enjoy one anothers Company; and I muſt tell you *Irene*, that no expreſſions can be welcom to me, that ſeem injurious to Piety; and compares your Love of me, with that which is as much beyond compariſon, as it's Object. They love a Creature too well, that cannot part with

with it in the Creator's Service, ſince he can make us amends for any thing that we loſe. And it is not only a diſparagement to a Chriſtian, but his Profeſſion, to complain of any loſs, whilſt he hath the Happineſs of God's Favour; therefore dear *Irene* eaſe my Grief, by letting me ſee, how well you can bear your own; and prefer the more generous, before the more tender Effects of kindneſs.

Alas! *Madam*, ſays *Irene*, all you ſay to comfort me hath the quite contrary Effect, ſince they diſcover the more the Excellency of the Perſon I am going to loſe, deprived of which I ſhall think the Converſation of the reſt of the World inſipid; and therefore if you will not let me have the Bleſſing of Living with you, let me have the Happineſs of Dying with you; for though Martyrdom may be formidable to a frail Woman, yet Heaven is more deſirable to a Chriſtian; and I ſhall not think much of a Scaffold or a Stake in my way to Heaven, in ſuch Company.

You know, replies *Theodora*, we are by Religion commanded to ſuffer Martyrdom, if obliged to it, yet we are not unneceſſarily to thruſt our ſelves upon ſuch a Work. The Apoſtles, who were the Heralds and Champions of the Goſpel, when perſecuted in one City were commanded to fly into another, and to avoid needleſs Dangers, one of them fled from *Damaſcus* to *Jeruſalem*, tho' to do ſo he was let down by the Wall in a Basket. And indeed we ſhould not raſhly engage in a conflict, where extraordinary Aſſiſtances are requiſite to the Victory; for

for the Diſciple that promiſed our Saviour he would Dye for him, in an hour or two was the firſt that renounced him. And one, who was ambitious to be a Martyr, eſteems it the Gift of God, both to believe in Chriſt, and to be able to ſuffer for him. If indeed *Irene* inſtead of me was deſigned for Martyrdom, I ſhould not envy her the Glory, to let others ſee, that Chriſtianity can animate a Woman, to a degree they think only appropriated to Men; I ſooner would implore Heaven to aſſiſt her Reſolution, than to reward it ingloriouſly. As the good Natured *Iſraelite*, willingly parted with his beloved *Eſther*, when ſhe parted from him to go to a Throne, *Irene's* Advancement would pleaſe me better than her Company. And if her Happineſs was not prefered before my own, it would be only becauſe they were ſo united, that I ſhould think mine placed in hers; let me therefore conjure you, rather to congratulate than lament my Removal; and be not troubled at the early happineſs of one you Love. In ſuch times you know not how ſoon the Perſecutors Sword may be your Lot; and this Life is at the longeſt ſo ſhort, that we cannot be long aſunder. In the mean time, the Expectation of that Future State, where the Fruition of one another will be but a ſmall Part of our Happineſs, may comfort you in my abſence, who ſhall be happy enough to wiſh you where I am, upon better Reaſons than you could wiſh me here again; let it then be a ſufficient token of my Eſteem and Love, that I part from *Irene* with Tears, when going to a place, *where all Tears ſhall be wiped* from our Eyes, *Rev.* 7. 17. which ſhall be

be ſucceeded with *a fullneſs of Joy*, which will laſt for ever, *Pſal.* 16. 11.

Didymus apprehended and carryed before the Judg owned the Fact and was Condemned.

Though *Irene* could not well anſwer theſe Reaſonings, yet being unwilling to be convinced it was her Duty to part with *Theodora*, ſhe reſolved to try the joynt perſwaſions of the Company; and that which favoured her deſign was, the arrival of a Gentleman, who had enquired after her Friend, and came to tell them, what was to be done in relation to *Didymus*. Upon which occaſion they were obliged to joyn the Company, who were impatient to hear what became of him.

The Gentleman, after a ſhort pauſe, gave the following Narrative; I ſuppoſe the Company is acquainted with what happened to the generous *Didymus*, from the time that *Theodora* was confined to that Infamous Place, and that when he had the Happineſs to promote her Eſcape; and therefore I ſhall briefly inform you, ſince time requires as much ſpeed as poſſible, when then the ſurprize was over of finding a Young Man in *Theadora's* Room, and he was dreſt in a habit fit to appear before the Judg, he was brought before him; ſome of them maliciouſly enough informing him what had paſſed, preſſing for Juſtice, for a Perſon who muſt needs be a Chriſtian, and who not ſatisfyed to be an Offender himſelf, had reſcued another from the Puniſhment the Laws had doomed her to.

The undaunted *Didymus* being thus charged, made this reſolute Anſwer, I am accuſed of being a Chriſtian, and of *Theodora's* Reſcuer, and notwithſtanding the aggravations of my Accuſers, I am ſo far from diſowning either, that

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I glory in both. As for Chriſtianity, I would not have embraced it, eſpecially when ſo much perſecuted, were I not reſolved to ſuffer for it, if there was occaſion. Therefore I ſhall neither excuſe my Crime, nor depricate my Infliction. Should I have refuſed my aſſiſtance to preſerve the Purity of the Chaſt *Theodora*, I ſhould have been wanting in my Duty to Humanity; which the Savage Deſigners of a Rape were going to violate. And the ſatisfaction of what I have done in that Reſpect, will ſupport me under any Suffering that Action may draw upon me, except my Loyalty to injured Truth, and my Compaſſion to Vertue in diſtreſs.

Says the Preſident, the Experience I have had of the Errors of your wild Sect, which by miſtake you call Religion, makes me not doubt but you have madneſs and impiety enough, to fear Death as little as the Gods. But ſince you pretend to be more Vertuous and Loyal than other Men, pray what can you ſay for Reſcuing a Malefactor out of the Hands of Juſtice, when her Sentence of Condemnation was to be Executed.

Had ſhe only been ſentenced to Death, I ſhould have only deplored your Cruelty, without endeavouring to reſcue her, though I could willingly have dyed in her ſtead; but it moved both Indignation and Grief, to ſee ſuch an Excellent Perſon, admired for Beauty and Vertue, as well as other Perfections, and who was the Honour of her Sex, condemned to ſuch infamous Uſage, unfit for the meaneſt of her Sex. And as Chaſtity in Women is ſo great a Vertue, that ſince all Nations allow them a privi-

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lege without reſerve, to preſerve it, againſt all attempts to deprive them of it, I thought that to aſſiſt a diſtreſſed Virgin to preſerve it, was to defeat Raviſhers, not to oppoſe Magiſtrates, and rather to hinder, than to commit a Crime; nor could I think I acted againſt *Roman* Judges, when I endeavoured to oppoſe deſigns, worſe than thoſe of *Barbarians*; nor did I doubt but when calmer Thoughts came into your Breaſt, that you would pardon an Action, which had it been executed, would have diſhonoured you more than it would have defiled *Theodora*; and which kept you innocent of an Act, which not only the fair Sex, but all ours that have Spirits of Vertue and good Nature, would condemn as inhuman.

If *Theodora*, anſwers the Preſident, were not Beautiful, and one of your obſtinate Sect, I believe you would ſcarce have made ſuch a deſperate Attempt, which renders you both diſobedient, and liable to the Laws.

I know not, replys *Didymus*, why it ſhould be a Reflection either upon *Theodora's* Beauty, or the Influence it may have upon me, that whatever I have done, hath been with the hazard of my Life; to reſcue her Innocency, and to deny my ſelf the Opportunities I endeavoured to prevent others in. But the Beauties of her Mind, without that of her Face, was ſufficient to induce me to attempt it. I have frequently in Camps contended with my fellow Souldiers, to preſerve the Chaſtity of Captives, who had no other Inducements to excite me to it, but their Innocency, and their being diſtreſſed Women; but *Theodora*, beſides her Beauty and Birth,

Birth, is ſo eminently accompliſhed with all the good Qualities and Excellences that can adorn her Sex, eſpecially Chaſtity, that I could not forbear expreſſing my Veneration for ſo ſhining a Vertue; yet I deny not but that my Religion had a ſhare in the Attempt, to ſave one that was an Ornament to it, and Loyal alſo. Our Chriſtian Doctrin teaches us, that in ſome Caſes *we ought to lay down our Lives for one another*, 1 *John* 3. 16. ſo that what I did was according to the Rules of that too. Nor did I prevent your Cruel Sentence by Force, but Stratagem; nor was any Bodies Life except my own in hazard, which for the ſake of Piety and Humanity I could always hazard.

The Preſident, though he knew *Didymus* had ſaid more than might be expected in his Defence, reſolved not to be ſatisfyed with a Perſon he deſigned to condemn, told him; It is not ſtrange, that thoſe who can call the Worſhip of God *Superſtition* and *Idolatry*; and Impiety *Religion*, ſhould ſtyle Rebellion againſt a Magiſtrate, Loyalty to the Truth. But endeavour never ſo much to cloak a Criminal Action, in the Form of Vertue, I can ſee through all this; your diſobedience to Civil Government; ſo contagious and frequent amongſt your Sect; that Princes cannot ſecure their own ſafety without your ruin, if Numbers were equal to the diſloyalty of your Principles and Practices.

To ſuffer for my Religion, anſwers *Didymus*, will be not only with a Reſignation but Joy; but ſhould Religion ſuffer with me, or for me, and to ſee Religion made a ſtate Crime, and that which Condemns all crimes, to be charged with

Diſobedience is no ſmall trouble to me. And therefore I deſire, that as I am more concerned, that my Religion ſhould be accuſed than my ſelf, you would give me leave to give you an Account of the Innocency and Truth of that Religion, which it's Calumniators have miſrepreſented. And though I think, the Liberty of ſerving God according to the Light and Laws of Nature, and the Welfare of Civil Societies, is a right which it would be Injuſtice to deny Mankind, yet I plead not for it now; it concerns you more to look to that than me; for if I ſuffer for the innocent Uſe of that Right, allowed by God and Nature, I ſhall but ſuffer a Tranſient Puniſhment, but you will expoſe your ſelf to an eternal one. No Perſons can be more Obedient to the Laws of Superiors than Chriſtians. And we that can ſhed our Blood as well as our Enemies, as ſucceſsfully as any Souldiers in your Armies, ſuffer our own to be ſhed by you, as tamely as Sheep. And it is ſtrange, that our Profeſſions of Loyalty and Obedience, which not only our Books, but our Blood have ſo often ſigned, cannot gain credit with you; nor will the Wounds that pierce us, convince you and open your Hearts, ſince ſome had rather pierce them, than know them. But the ſame Care that bids us obey Authority, forbids us to do thoſe things Authority condemns us for; for as God is the Creator and Supreme Governour of Man, his Laws are of the greateſt Authority. And as Princes are his Subjects, and his Lieutenants upon Earth, to diſobey their Commands when contrary to his, is not ſo much diſobedience to the Subordinate Power, as the

the contrary is disloyalty to the Supreme. In such cases, to prefer God's Laws before his, is no more Rebellion to the Emperor, than if we should disobey the Commands of a Governour of a Province, which were repugnant to those of the Emperor. And if we cannot yield an active Obedience to the Civil Sovereign, we deny not the utmost we can consent to, which is passive Obedience; and when our Consciences will not permit us to do what we call unlawful, we refuse not to suffer freely what Penalties he pleases to impose. And give me leave to add, that our Religion is so far from being a Cloak to present advantages, that we daily renounce them, and our Lives too, to preserve our Loyalty to our Maker, without hopes of recompence in this World; and in the other, we can receive none but from a Judg, who can neither be bribed nor deceived; and is severer to Crimes, than the severest Persecutor is to Innocents on Earth. But on the contrary, our hopes of inestimable Rewards in Heaven, for our Loyalty to God and his Truth, and the internal satisfaction of a good Conscience, so elevates our Hearts, that we detest the ambition of those that aspire to Earthly Crowns, and pity the conditions of Princes themselves. And I dare say, that the Innocence of our Principles is as evident in our Profession, as our Practice and Sufferings. Christians are every where Numerous, except in your Temples, and your Enemies as well as Armies are convinced, that they know how to kill, as well as to dye; so that we only are exposed to sufferings, because we are forbid by our Innocence, to use a forbidden

way of defending our ſelves, and I doubt not but that our calm ſubmiſſion to ſuch Uſages, will evince, that we do not deſerve them.

The Judg finding that what *Didymus* ſaid, had much more Effect upon the People, than what he ſaid, had upon *Didymus*, to break off this Diſcourſe, told him with a ſtern Countenance, that it was time for him to remember, that he was a Judg and not a Prieſt; and tho' he had hitherto out of Compaſſion uſed Perſwaſions, he was now obliged to tell him, that the Gods he Worſhipped he was ſure were true ones, and if *Didymus* did not ſpeedily Sacrifice to them, he would feel their Power by being put to Death, which his obſtinacy deſerved, and which he ſeemed fond of.

Didymus calmly and unconcerned, as well as reſolutely anſwered; that though I am ready to ſuffer for my Religion, when called to it; yet I would not expoſe my ſelf with an obſtinate denial, to hear what may be ſaid againſt it; we Chriſtians are neither ſo obſtinate or conceited, but we are more willing what we believe ſhould be examined at the Bar, than our ſelves ſhould be condemned for them; and as we do not renounce, ſo neither do we embrace Perſecution for the ſake of it; nor are we ſo wilful, but that we are willing, both to be inſtructed and undeceived, if our Opinions are Erroneous. This ſays *Didymus*, I ſay, not in reſpect of your being not a Prieſt, but a Judg. But to ſhew that Conſtancy is not Obſtinacy, and if we could ſee Arguments on your ſide, we would not rather renounce Life, than embrace Truth. And pardon me *Sir*, if I think, that though you

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are conſtituted Supreme Judg of Life and Death, yet you are not Supreme Judg of Truth and Falſhood. And therefore I take your worſhiping of many Deities to be an Argument of their not being true ones; and though it is a declaration of your Opinion, it is no demonſtration that it ought to be mine. If you offer us Arguments, we are ready to anſwer them, and propoſe ours; but when only Threats are made uſe of, we diſpiſe them, ſince they aſſault not our Reaſon, but our Conſtancy. To conclude, let me tell you, that the Chriſtian Religion can ſo fortify the Mind, as to place it above Political Juriſdiction; and I ſhall with far leſs trouble ſuffer your Sentence, than you will ſometime or another feel, for having pronounced it; nor can all your executed Threats ſhake my Conſtancy, or leſſen my Joy.

The Judg enraged to ſee his Power deſpiſed, and himſelf affronted, as he thought, told him, he would defer the fatal Sentence but one hour longer, which he allowed him to repent of his Errors in, and command him to be led to the Place of Execution, intending to follow at ſome diſtance himſelf. Whether to feed his Tragical Eyes with the Spectacle, or to prevent Tumults or Diſorders, which *Didymus*'s Courage, or the Pity excited in the Multitude, might occaſion.

Didymus *going to Execution,* Theodora *offers to releaſe him,* &c.

The Gentleman having ended his Diſcourſe, it raiſed a juſt *Idea* in the Minds of the Hearers, of *Didymus*'s ſingular Courage and Piety; eſpecially in the Ladies; and ſo far moved the grateful and compaſſionate *Theodora*, that ſhe reſolved to reſcue him, if poſſible; and prepared to

attempt it; and minding that the Company was wholly intent upon the Gentlemans relation, and minded nothing elſe, ſhe took the opportunity to withdraw, and by a back pair of Stairs conveighed her ſelf out of the Houſe, and went as privately to a certain Death, as others are wont to ſhun it, leaving her Friends both ſurprized and concerned, when once they miſſed her, finding all the Methods they uſed to retrieve her fruitleſs. For *Theodora* went as ſoon as ſhe could, to the Company ſhe was told attended the Preſident, where ſhe was not long, before ſhe found her brave Lover under a ſtrict and rude Guard, with a Look ſo Manly and Serene, as deſerved another kind of uſage. This ſight ſo moved the compaſſionate *Theodora*, that ſhe could with leſs Reluctancy dye, than plead for *Didymus*, yet her Gratitude overcoming her Baſhfulneſs, ſhe ſtepped towards the Tribunal, with more eaſe than ſhe expected; her Beauty and Meen influencing the by-ſtanders to make way for her paſſage; where ſhe had not been long, before the Number of Gazers attracted the Preſidents Eyes, where after, in reſpect to his Dignity, ſhe had lifted up her Vail, her peculiar Beauty, which was eaſily diſtinguiſhed by thoſe that had ſeen it before, made her known to him.

But though her Preſence ſurpriſed the Judg, he admired her Courage as well as Beauty; the Bluſhes of her Cheeks, and the Aſſuredneſs of her Looks, diſcovering both her Modeſty and want of Fear; ſays ſhe, *Sir*, it is very unuſual for Perſons of my Sex and Religion to come here unſent for; but as the Action is extraordinary,

dinary, the Occaſion is ſo too; for Vertue and Juſtice which you ſit here to exerciſe, as well as Gratitude upon the higheſt Obligations, engage my appearance in the behalf of that brave Priſoner *Didymus*, and offer you the Object of Juſtice, which he cannot be without Cruelty. For if a Debt be due to the Law, it would be ſevere to puniſh the Security, when the Principal offers to pay the Treſpaſs: for now I am come to redeem my Hoſtage. Nor is it your Intereſt to decline the Exchange, ſince you will by that means preſerve one, whoſe Courage and Gratitude, made him both appear for me, and ſignalize himſelf in the Roman Army; and ſince my Eſcape was his Crime, I hope my Surrender will obtain his Pardon.

Here *Theodora* pauſed, to recover the diſorder this Attempt had put her Modeſty into; and to obſerve the Judges Countenance, that it might inſtruct her the better what ſhe had to ſay further. The Preſident continued ſilent, either to hear the further Progreſs of her charming Voice, or to admire the Charms which adorned her Face, or that mixture of Sadneſs, Concern had mixed in her Looks, which had in ſome meaſure mitigated him. Whereupon the fair Supplicant thus purſues her Diſcourſe; but if your Juſtice and Clemency diſmiſs this Gentleman, perhaps no Object could better warrant the Exerciſe of either; for his Life hath been always hazarded for his Princes, and the Action he was now engaged in was ſo Heroick, that he could have no other Motive but his Generoſity, nor any other End, but the Exerciſe of it; nor can your Clemency be a bad Example, ſince

it cannot be paralelled but by Persons too Vertuous to be Delinquents. And if such Actions be Criminal, they cannot probably grow common Crimes. Here *Theodora* perceiving *Didymus* was likely to interrupt her, thus prevents him. And you brave *Didymus*, prevent not the accompliſhment of my deſign; what I do is to evidence my Gratitude, and to let you ſee there can be as Noble Acts of Generoſity in a Perſon not inſenſible of the Dictates of the Vertues of Generoſity and Friendſhip. I was glad, continues ſhe, to be delivered from the Ignominy of a Rape, but I deſigned not to be deprived of the Glory of ſuffering for Chriſt, which is the only opportunity I had to ſhew that I declined the Diſhonour, and not Death; and never deſigned for the ſake of an inſignificant Maid to deprive the World of one of the moſt Generous of Men. The only way to encreaſe your paſt Favours is, to allow me to ſpeak my Senſe of them, which may diminiſh, but can never make a Retribution of them. If then you will compleat your Obligation of preſerving my Virginity, I hope you will not prevent my obtaining the Crown of Martyrdom.

Didymus's reſpect to his Miſtreſs kept him from interrupting a Diſcourſe, which he was ſo little ſatisfyed with; therefore ſo ſoon as ſhe had put an end to it, he thus begun. Ceaſe, *Theodora*, to plead for a Life, that you are as cruel to me in offering to preſerve, as you are in hazarding your own. And if I hoped not for more from the Preſident than I am like to have from you, I ſhould think my ſelf as miſerable as you are unkind. But I hope our Impartial

Judg

Judg diſcerns, that the Exceſs of your Goodneſs hath the greateſt Intereſt in your Plea; to ſtate the Caſe, being ſufficient to plead it upon my Account. For I promoted and facilitated your Eſcape; and as I was a Pawn to the Laws, I am doomed for your Offence, to the Puniſhment aſſigned you; which ſince I joyfully offer, the Preſident need not be told, that the Surety's Payment diſcharges the Principal Debt, eſpecially when he not only offers it, but deſires the acceptance of it. I hope then, ſays he, to the Preſident, you will accept of my Life for hers, who merits not only a long but a happy one, and that when my Sentence of Condemnation is paſſed, it may diſcharge her. Self-Preſervation is ſo Natural, that it cannot be made Capital, without puniſhing as well what Men are, as what they do. And Purity and Honour is ſo becoming a chaſte Virgin, that the Conſequences can ſcarce be made Penal. Thus I who have refuſed to do an Illegal thing to avoid Dangers, yet glory in the Crime, and am the juſt Object of the Rigour of your Laws: and as her Errors have been through my Perſwaſion, ſo her Puniſhment ought to be in my Perſon. And what ſhe hath ſaid to involve her ſelf in this Matter, I hope will rather be looked upon, by a *Roman* Magiſtrate, as an Effect of her Generoſity, not as an Argument of her Crime. And ſure the *Romans* have too much Gallantry, to puniſh that Vertue in a Lady, which they would applaud and crown in a Souldier.

But to addreſs my ſelf to you, *Theodora*, ſays *Didymus*, I cannot but complain and deplore my Infelicity, that after I had done all I could to preſerve

preſerve your Life, you come now to hazard it, and end mine with Sorrow. But ſhould you prevail in the unwelcome, tho' generous Attempt, you make, you were cruel to envy me the two greateſt Honours I aſpired to; the Glory of Martyrdom, and the Honour of *Theodora*'s Reſcue. Had I as many Lives as you have Vertues, I ſhould give them all for a few hours of yours; being unlikely to be preſerved by your Suffering for my Actions. Therefore *Madam*, ſince my higheſt Satisfaction terminates in your Happineſs, the only way to reward my Services is to take care of your own Preſervation; and don't make them fruitleſs, but be content to live for his ſake, who joyfully dyes for you.

The Judg all this while was ſilent, being kept from interrupting them by the Generoſity and Gracefulneſs of the Contenders: But his Curioſity could no longer ſuſpend his ſtern Nature, which urged him to tell the Generous Couple; You preſume to plead as if each was the other's Judg, and had the Authority of condemning or abſolving one another; and as if I were an unconcerned Auditor, or only to ratify your Agreement: But you ſhall know to your coſt, that *Roman* Magiſtrates are not thus to be trifled with.

Great *Sir*, ſays *Didymus*, nothing but your Miſapprehenſion can make you think our Conduct a ſlight of you; for it was not in contempt of your Authority, but in hopes of your Equity and Clemency; Vertues which become a Magiſtrate, would temper your Authority and Power. This Preſumption, *Sir*, made us take the Liberty, hoping you would not puniſh two for

for the fault of one; and if either of us was to ſuffer, your Clemency would releaſe the other.

Though theſe Words evidently ſeemed to reſpect the Judg's Dignity and not his Perſon, yet the Preſident, as Self-Flattery commonly attends Men in Power, taking the reſpect to himſelf, gave *Didymus*, the Liberty to proceed, in theſe words: You will not deny, *Sir*, but that Goodneſs, vvhereof Clemency in a Magiſtrate is a great Part, and vvho is God's Vice-gerent, may gain as much Veneration, as Power and Greatneſs; for thoſe of your Religion, when they ſpeak moſt reverently, prefer the Title of *moſt Good*, before that of *moſt Great*, ſtyling him, as the Chriſtians do, *Deus optimus maximus*: And Clemency can never be more a Vertue than when exerciſed towards vertuous Perſons, in preſerving them from the Perſecutions of Fortune, and the undeſigned Rigour of the Laws: I ſay undeſigned, becauſe I cannot think, the *Roman* Lawgivers, who honoured injured Chaſtity ſo much in *Lucretia*, and rewarded Gallantry and other Vertues with Crowns, ever deſigned *Chaſtity*, *Conſtancy* and *Gratitude* to be reckoned amongſt Criminal things. And though Chriſtians may differ from others in Matters of Religion: Yet *Roman* Moral Vertues alter not their Nature for being practiſed by Chriſtians. And thoſe, whom Love of Vertue made them Maſters of the World, honoured it in their Enemies, ſo that one or two Statues of *Hannibal* were erected in *Rome*, which Honour was more Glorious to them than if they had vanquiſhed him; and ſure thoſe who honoured *Lucretia* with Statues, would not think

think *Theodora* worthy of a Scaffold or a Stake. This Lady's Actions and mine, in milder Terms, have been looked upon otherwiſe than as Criminal: But, *Sir*, if there muſt be a Sacrifice to the angry Laws, I beg, my Blood may ſatisfy them, and ſpare this innocent Lady; who I hope may be a worthy Object of your Compaſſion, her Excellences not only making it reaſonable but meritorious. She is the faireſt Ornament of *Antioch*: And to put an untimely end to ſuch an Exemplary Life, for Actions laudable in their own Nature, and which nothing but rigour can make criminal, would be to make the Laws a Terror to the Good rather than to the Wicked. To treat her as a Delinquent would be inhuman, whom you might wiſh your Daughters to be like; and by the Grant I implore, you will not only gain the Thanks of her Sex, but the Applauſe of others, and the Satisfaction to ſave one of the moſt admirable Perſons in the whole World.

Didymus finding *Theodora* was preparing to interrupt him, thus re-addreſſed himſelf to her, *Madam*, inſiſt not on what is inconſiſtent with my Love, nor increaſe my Infelicity, by making it my Duty to oppoſe youre deſires, refuſe not to preſerve the moſt accompliſhed Perſon in the World; nor deny me the happineſs of being your deliverer, nor the ſatisfaction after the glory of ſaving her, of dying for her. But perceiving her ready to renew her Conteſt, he told her with a low Voice, *Madam*, though the Preſident hath not commanded an end of our Conteſt, yet my condition and reſolution muſt put an end to it; for it is in vain to think to

ſave

ſave my Life by putting an end to your own, ſince a Life ſo obtained would neither be eaſie nor laſting; ſo that to oblige me to ſurvive you, would make me live a life ſpent in continually deploring ſo great a loſs. Therefore I beſeech you forbear to require ſuch Proofs of Obedience, which is not in my Power to give, nor which you ought to require; ſince it would be as impoſſible as unhappy, for *Didymus* to ſurvive *Theodora*.

O admirable Conteſt! the Noble Antagoniſts not ſtriving for Victory, but Death; or ſtrive to overcome, that the Conqueror might dye for the vanquiſhed; where ſelf-Love is Sacrificed to Love, equally Chaſte, and without Intereſt, and Vertue in each, endeavours to make it ſelf Criminal, that the other may ſeem Innocent. This makes the Inſpired Sentence true, that *Love is ſtronger than Death*, the former making theſe Generous Lovers Rivals for the later.

Both Condemned to Dye, and their diſcourſe in the way to Execution.

The afflicted Virgin finding her Diſwaſions of no Effect upon *Didymus*, addreſſed her ſelf to the Preſident; and with Looks, Geſtures and Words ſufficient to ſoften one that was not invincible, told him, Tho' this Gentleman's Arguments may repreſent him fitter of the two to be Condemned, yet I hope your Authority will not think the worſe of his Generoſity, and that what he hath done will influence you more than what he hath ſaid. He hath been always ſucceſsful in your Camps, and one that can ſhew ſuch Gallantry this Day, how ſerviceable may he be in the *Roman* Camps, his Courage being heightened by Gratitude, in the acquiſt of Glo-

ry,

ry, and the ſervice of his Country. If Intentions muſt make Actions guilty, he cannot be thought ſo, ſince he deſigned not the breach of any Law, but did what he thought the deſign of all Laws, *viz.* to protect Innocency, and encourage Vertue. But if what he hath done comes within the rigour of the Law, I hope his Fault is not ſo great, but that you may admit what I requeſt for him, which is, that he may make amends for what he hath done amiſs in the *Roman* Army, which will be more ſerviceable to the Publick, than his Death can. But if you deſign ſeverity for him, as he hath done ſo much for me, you may more ſenſibly puniſh him by my Death, than by inflicting Puniſhment on himſelf. To which Arguments no doubt but ſhe would have added others, but that the Preſident, vexed to find that neither of them valued Life, which was what he thought moſt to terrify them with, prevented her; telling her with a ſtern Countenance, I will hear no more; I have heard too much already; it becomes not a *Roman* Magiſtrate, to ſuffer Criminals to diſobey the Laws, ſlight their Threats, and to glory in their Crimes. What you have both ſaid, to prove your ſelves guilty, is ſufficient to condemn you both. Wherefore as you cannot agree, I will be Umpire, and give you both what each deſires, and deſerve. You obſtinate Maid ſhall Dye for having broke Priſon; and you diſobedient Souldier ſhall Dye, for promoting her Eſcape. But the chiefeſt Crime is, you ſhall both Dye for being Chriſtians, as Enemies to the Roman Emperors, and the Gods that made them ſo.

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This Sentence being paſſed, the Priſoners were ordered to be taken away, and put under a ſtrong Guard, till things were prepared for their Execution, which were directed to be haſtened. But finding by the Looks and Murmurs of the Multitude, that *Theodora's* Charms and Vertue, and the Youths Courage and Friendſhip, made their Sentence ungrateful to them, he declared, that whilſt he was diſpatching other buſineſs, he gave leave to any to attempt to convert thoſe obſtinate Offenders, declaring further, that if they would ſeaſonably. with Incenſe in their Hands, fly to the Altars of the Gods, and implore their Protection and Pardon, he would grant what they requeſted.

As this Liberty expoſed them to the aſſaults of Infidels, Ambitious to make them Proſelytes, ſo it gave them the opportunity of converſing with one another.

Didymus ſeeing him near a ſeparation from his admirable Miſtreſs, felt ſome Diſorders, which his Courage upon other occaſions could eaſily reſiſt, which made him thus expreſs himſelf to the fair Perſon, that occaſioned it; *Madam*, though the Courſe of my Life hath led me to ſee death in various Forms and Shapes, without being diſcompoſed; yet when I ſee the World and my ſelf going to be deprived of ſo excellent a Perſon, and one I the moſt love in it and admire, in the Flower of her Age, and by the hand of an Executioner; I ſhould think it ſtupidneſs rather to be unconcerned, than weakneſs to be much ſo.

I was ſo fully ſatisfyed before, ſays *Theodora* of your Friendſhip and Compaſſion, that this new Proof, is both needleſs and unwelcome; for if any thing ſhould grieve me, when entring *into the fullneſs of Joy*, it ſhould be, that your good Nature makes this ſeemingly Diſtreſſed Condition uneaſy to you; which through God's Aſſiſtance is little ſo to me; which will be much more eaſy, if congratulating rather than deploring our Martyrdom, you will favour me in the greateſt Part of my Grief, which is to be unhappily acceſſary to yours, and the ſeeing you concerned at it. That Circumſtance of my Death, which afflicts you, ſhould rather leſſen than increaſe your Sorrow; for I take my early removal out of the World rather as a Favour than an Infelicity, where I both ſee, ſuffer and do ſo much ill. To be early freed from the ſnares of a perſecuting Age, and the *evil to come*, is more a Privilege than a Calamity, to thoſe that are ſenſible, that one can never be unſeaſonable in Heaven, nor too ſoon happy. And both in the Old and New Teſtament, thoſe who were firſt recorded to dye happily, died young, as juſt *Abel*, and *John* the Baptiſt; and both ſuffered for the ſake of Piety. And the Lamb of God who *did no Sin*, but by his Example, Precepts and Sufferings, *took away the Sins of the World*, ſuffered in the Flower of his Age. It being neither an Unhappineſs nor Token of God's Diſpleaſure to eſcape the dangers of a troubleſom Paſſage, by being blown into a Port by a boiſterous Wind. And were it fit for a Woman to exhort a Heroe, it ſhould be that both of us ſhould entertain our preſent Condition, with

with Sentiments becoming Chriſtians. And as it does not concern me; ſo it ought not to trouble you ſympathetically, that I am ſecured from the Inconveniences of Age; and pray make uſe of that Courage now, that you have uſed all your Life time; nor repine, that we are to fall by the hand of an Executioner, ſince that was the Fate of our Saviour himſelf. And if we conſider the manner of our Suffering, we may reaſonably aſſume the Apoſtle's Sentiments, who after the Miſuſage of the Jewiſh Council, *went from their preſence rejoycing, that they had been thought worthy to ſuffer for his Name, Acts* 5. 41, upon which Account we are going to ſuffer. For *Didymus*, Providence hath not ſuffered us to periſh, by Lightning, tedious Sickneſs, nor old Age, nor yet in a Common Cauſe; but our Fate is Noble, and not a Debt due to Nature, or the Puniſhment of Sin, but the Nobleſt Act of Chriſtianity, Martyrdom, and the neareſt way to everlaſting Glory.

A Diſcourſe becoming more a Martyr than a Virgin, made *Didymus* deſire it ſhould continue, being both aſſiſted by it and charmed; and therefore finding *Theodora*'s Looks to be as admirable as her Beauty, and remembring her Inſtances of Piety and Vertue as well as Courage, they ſuggeſted ſuch Sentiments as made him tell her, *Madam*, I ſhould be juſtly diſconſolate, that I and the World ſhould be deprived of ſuch an Excellent Perſon, as you have ſhewn your ſelf to be, were I not aſſured, that as the loſs will be great, ſo it will not be laſting, and that in a future ſtate I ſhall be allowed, what Death will ſoon deny me in this, and ſhall converſe

with you in Heaven more freely, than our Perſecutions and your Reſerve will allow me here; for I believe that thoſe who have the happineſs to meet in Heaven, will know one another, and that the remembrance of what paſſed on Earth, will add to their ſatisfaction there. For in Heaven not only our Faculties, but our Memory, will be furniſhed with ſuitable Objects, and our Capacities enlarged; and that in a Condition much Inferior to that, our Knowledg of one another hath been ſo much advanced as was neceſſary, without ſuch common helps as were requiſite to make them ſo. *Adam* as ſoon as he ſaw *Eve*, ſaid, *ſhe was Bone of his Bone, and Fleſh of his Fleſh*; and *Noah* as ſoon as awake, knew his younger Son had behaved himſelf amiſs; and at our Saviour's Transfiguration, the three choſen Diſciples knew *Moſes* and *Elias*, whom they had never ſeen before, though diſguiſed in Glory, *Mat.* 11. 4. *Luke.* 9. 31. and St. *Paul* tells the *Theſſalonians*, they ſhall be his Joy and Crown at the appearance of the Lord 1 *Theſ.* 2. 19, 20. Whence it appears, that both the Preachers and Converts at that appearance ſhall be known, and *the Aſſembly of the firſt Born, whoſe Names are written in Heaven*, and therefore Men may know one another. Our Saviour, ſays *Didymus*, tells us, that there is Joy in Heaven for a repenting Sinner, and whether their Knowledg is Intuite, or by the Information of Angels ſent to this World, it is plain they have a Knowledg of Perſons and their Actions. And *Abraham* is repreſented in Paradiſe, putting the rich Man in Mind of his State and that of *Lazarus* in this World.

World. Nor is the Memory of Perſons and paſt Actions forgot in the Kingdom of Darkneſs, the rich Man remembring not only *Lazarus*, but his five Brothers, and their deplorable Condition.

Didymus then making a ſtop, gave *Theodora* opportunity to tell him; Generous *Didymus*, ſince the beſt Teachers have been of different Opinions of what you diſcourſe, and they eſteem it not a matter of Faith, whether we know one another in Heaven or not, but if they believe it, it may be with other Sentiments than we commonly imagin; for when the Diſciple teaches us, that though *we be here the Children of God, it does not yet appear what we ſhall be*, to which he adds, that *when our Saviour ſhall be manifeſted*, we ſhall be like him, when I think of theſe things, I am apt to think that we judg too much of our future State, from what we obſerve in our frail Condition here, nor ſhall we have a juſt *Idea* of Heaven, till we come there. Our Notions then will be raiſed as well as our Bodies, and our Love and Affections will be transfigured with them; and though we may have mutual Love there, it will be upon other Accounts, better grounded and regulated. And that External Beauty which is here ſo much overvalued, will be much inferior to every glorifyed Body, and will be ſo inconſiderable as to make ſmall Impreſſions on thoſe that remember it, as the Luſtre of the Sun obſcures that of the Stars; ſo that External Qualities will have but little Effects, in reſpect of thoſe excited by our Relation to our common Lord, our reſemblance to him being the chief ground of

our Esteem and Affections. Children of the same Parents being early separated, when they meet after they are grown up, are meer strangers; nor do they mind the Accidents of Play, or Features that are altered by time and growth; but what produces their new kindness, are Personal Qualities, suitable to their present State, and worthy of esteem and kindness. And if some Years absence may make our neareſt Relations unknown, what alterations will there be in Bodies separated in many Ages, who shall meet in Heaven with Minds as much changed as their Bodies. But a vertuous Complacency will then affect us more than Natural Relations or external Beauty, or those Trifles that here create the greatest Fondness.

But think you, says *Didymus*, that vertuous Affections cannot be admitted in Heaven? since the Scripture informs us, that the Angels are affected with Joy and Desire, rejoycing at the Conversion of a Sinner, and desiring to pry into the Mysteries of Religion; and have peculiar Care and Actions for apposite ends. Thus the Angel of *Persia* withstood *Michael*, and an Angel talked to *Daniel*, *Dan.* 10. 13.

I don't deny, says *Theodora*, but that the blessed know one another, and for *Didymus*'s sake I wish it so; but I believe the Sentiments of that Knowledg will be different from what Men imagin. And I am apter to believe, the Saints, mutual Knowledg, because otherwise I cannot conceive, how God's Justice will be manifest in rewarding and punishing Person's Actions; Personal Circumstances altering the Nature of Moral Actions. And since those in Heaven will

have

have Eternity to converſe in, in their various Conferences, they may meet with ſome Circumſtances which will enable their enlightened Sagacity to know one another, and to diſcover their former acquaintance. But on the other hand, we ſhall have more noble Objects to entertain moſt of our time, than the deſpicable Objects that now amuſe us; as the pompous Solemnity of a *Roman* Triumph takes away the attention to our neareſt Friends. And when the Saints love and converſe with one another, it will be upon different Terms from thoſe ſuitable to a Mortal State. And as there will be no differences of Ages and Sexes in Heaven, ſince they ſhall *be like Angels*, and have *Bodies conformed to the glorious Body of their Redeemer*; ſo the new Friendſhip there will be grounded on their Perſonal Excellences, as being Rivals in the Love of God, and as they reſemble *the Brightneſs of his Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon*: But we need not diſpute about Queſtions, which a ſmall time will reſolve, and ſince Heaven is a place bleſſed with *the fulneſs of Joy*, to converſe with one another, will either be part of our Happineſs, or not neceſſary to it.

A Roman Officer endeavours to diſwade Didymus from his Reſolution.

Whilſt *Didymus* and his Miſtreſs, waited for the Execution of the Preſidents barbarous Sentence, amongſt the *Roman* Souldiers who waited to ſee the approaching Tragedy, an Officer ſympathizing with *Didimus*'s Gallantry, endeavoured to diſwade him from his fatal Reſolution. Wherefore taking our Martyr aſide, ſays he, the Gods are witneſs, it is not without amazement and trouble, more than my own Af-

flictions have occaſioned, that Conſtancy ſhould deſtroy ſo much Gallantry; which, though in other caſes a Vertue, againſt the Gods is a Crime, therefore after ſo much Courage and Patience, exerciſe your Prudence, and reſcue your ſelf by Compliance, from Impiety and Death.

Kindneſs and Civility, ſays *Didimus*, thus expreſſed, deſerves thanks, but not complyance, for what you call Conſtancy againſt Truth, will coſt me my Life; ſo that the Religion I profeſs, may lead me into Death, but not Error.

It's Intrinſick to a Religions being true or falſe, that it's Embracers are encouraged by Preferments, or expoſed to Perſecutions. Fear in Religion is but an ill Counſellor, except in chuſing a bad one, or living contrary to the Rules of a good one; nor does he deſerve the Bleſſing of a good choice, that reſpects his Life more than his Soul in it. And as Truth ſhould direct us in our choice, ſo nothing ought to make us deſert it, but a conviction of it's Errors. If then you can ſhew me, that the Chriſtian Religion is falſe, and yours true, I ſhall alter my choice; but if you uſe Menaces, or any other Arguments than thoſe of Truth, I ſhall not only ſlight, but contemn them. And were it not good Will that induced you, I ſhould take it as an Injury to uſe ſuch an Argument againſt my Conſtancy, which muſt ſuppoſe me a Coward, to be made a Proſelyte by ſuch. And though I had leſs aſſurance of it than I have, yet on this occaſion I would not deſert it, ſince a choice made through threats or fear, would make me think I had made an ill choice, of a Religion I could not Dye for. Generous

Generous *Didymus* replies the *Roman*, my deſign is not to fright you into Apoſtacy; my Vertue would as little offer it, as your Courage would admit, ſuch Meaſures to be ſucceſful. But thinking I have made a right choice in worſhiping the Gods I do, I thought it no fault to perſwade you rather to live in a true Religion, than to dye for a falſe one. And I cannot but wonder, that a Perſon that hath ſo much courted Honour, ſhould loſe himſelf for one who was crucifyed by the moſt ſacred Perſons of his own Nation, as a Malefactor, and hath invited his followers to involve themſelves in the ſame unhappy State.

Idolaters, replys *Didymus*, have erroneous Notions of the Chriſtian Religion, and the ways they take to oppoſe it, are improper and inhuman; and they are as much miſinformed about the Myſteries of our Religion, as they are miſtaken about their own. Our Saviour indeed, who was ſent from God, with a Prophetick Authority, ſharply rebuked the Jewiſh Superſtitions, ſhewing them their Hypocriſy, and reproaching their Practices, both by his Doctrin and Exemplary Life, which moved thoſe exaſperated Hypocrites, as their Authority was undermined, and their Perſons diſcredited, maliciouſly to attempt his Deſtruction; but his Conſtancy was too great, to ſuffer him to decline the exerciſe of his Vertues, for fear of the greateſt Dangers, or even Death; which he both foreſaw and foretold, and willingly ſuffered, to deliver thoſe that believed in him, and to ſecure them Everlaſting Life.

And that his Death was for the Sins of others and not his own, is evident, ſince he was abſolved by his Judg, who paſſed the Sentence for fear of his Accuſers only; and he was further abſolved by God Almighty, who, by Prodigies in Heaven and Earth, declared that he was diſpleaſed with thoſe that put his Son to Death; and by raiſing him in three Days to an Immortal Life, he both ſhewed how well he loved him, and alſo gave his followers Power to partake of that glorious ſtate he was advanced to. So that thoſe he diſtinguiſhes from the reſt of his Servants and calls to Martyrdom, ought to eſteem that Call both an Honour and Privilege; ſince by dying for Truth and Conſtancy, they become more like him, and may hope for greater advantages in the Merits of his Martyrdom. For to thoſe he vouchſafes the Honour of ſuffering for Truth and Piety, he not only reſerves future Recompences, but gives them a happy foretaſt of them here, and I cannot but eſteem it an addition to his immenſe Love, that made him dye for us, that he enables us to dye for him.

Indeed, as he took upon him the Form of a Man, ſo he ſuffered himſelf to be uſed as Good Men often are; but he was not caſt down from Heaven, as *Vulcan* is ſaid to be, but came down to ſhew Men how to live a heavenly Life. Nor did he like *Jupiter*, commit Actions in human ſhape below the Dignity of a Man, but taught Men Doctrin worthy of Heaven it came from; and by his Exemplary Life ſhewed them, how they muſt be tranſlated there; ſubmitting to the Infamy and Torments of the Croſs, that his Death

Death might purchaſe for them, what his Spirit and Life had qualifyed them for.

The *Roman* Officer not yet diſcouraged, reſolved to purſue his Attempt thus. The ſame reaſon that leſſens my admiration, that you ſhould deſpiſe Death for an Erroneous Religion makes me wonder at your unconcern to eſcape the Death that threatens your Obſtinacy; for though the Love of Glory may invite a Man to hazard his Life to attain it, yet that Heroick Paſſion ought to make Men apprehenſive of the Extremities, where Death is attended with Infamy, and received at the hand of an Executioner.

The weakneſs of your Gods, anſwers *Didymus*, have too much miſled you, to make Eſtimates of Good and Evil, by meaſures unworthy to be acquieſced in by a Chriſtian, who cannot merit that Title without being more than an Ordinary Man. The Laws of God and right Reaſon, not of Men of Power, are to judg of Good and Evil Actions. Nor think, that Conſtancy is leſs a Vertue, becauſe that Tyrants call it Obſtinacy, and condemn Men for it to the ſame Puniſhments that are allotted to diſhonourable Actions. The Reſpect our Religion obliges us to pay to Civil Magiſtrates, though Perſecutors, enjoyns us not to reſiſt unjuſt Sentences by force; yet this Submiſſion hinders not their Sentence from being unjuſt, nor hinders us from thinking ſo; and conſequently, the Teſtimony of our Conſciences, inwardly abſolves us, though outward Judges condemn us; for as Criminal Perſons are Conſcious of their Guilt, and either deny or excuſe their Faults, we Chriſtians

Chriſtians confeſs what you call a Crime, and glory in it, without deprecating the Fate, that attends our Conſtancy; nor can Death from an infamous hand fright us from a glorious Cauſe; ſince we eſtimate it by the Quality of the Action, and not the Condition of him that afflicted the Puniſhment; and though an Executioner's hand may deſtroy a Malefactor; yet it cannot make one, and a Scaffold cannot make Death infamous, if the Cauſe does not; nor can the Inſtruments of Death, hinder Vertue from being glorious; ſince it demonſtrates the Sufferer's Conſtancy, embracing Death, to ſhun the Contempt of the Generality of Mankind That gallant Commander *Attilius Regulus* is leſs celebrated for his Military Exploits, than the cruel Death he ſuffered under the *Carthaginians*, to whom he ſurrendred himſelf with the expectation of ſuch barbarous Uſage. And as Submiſſion to Indignities was not inglorious, ſince he did it to ſhun the breaking of his Word to his Enemies, it cannot be a diſhonourable Action in Chriſtians to prevent the Violation of their Faith, ſolemnly given to a Divine Friend, who hath ſuffered more for them, than they can ſuffer for him. And though *Socrates*, who by the Oracles was pronounced the wiſeſt of Men, was condemned to dye by Poiſon from the hand of a Commiſſioner, yet ſince his Vertues and not his Crimes occaſioned it, his Fame was not deſtroyed with his Life, nor was it a diſadvantage to his Reputation, but that of his Accuſers and Judges; whom after Ages condemned more as Criminals, and thought more unworthy than thoſe that Executed their Sentence. And, ſays *Didymus*, ſacred Records encourage me to expect,

pect, that if Poſthumous Fame be ſuch a Bleſſing, what Indignities we now ſuffer, will procure it hereafter; for I foreſee, that the *Roman* Eagles will ſtoop to the Croſs of Chriſt, and that the Temples of the falſe Gods, will be conſecrated to the true One. The Sword of the Civil Magiſtrate which is now your beſt Argument will be then in the Chriſtians Hands, which needs not be employed againſt your Religion, which requires not the Oppoſition of Power, ſince the withdrawing of it is ſufficient to ruin it, and then juſter Poſterity will read the Hiſtory of thoſe Perſecutions as they do the Accounts of Wars, Plagues, Maſſacres, and other publick Calamities.

Didymus's Replys, made the Perſon ſatisfyed, that neither threats nor perſwaſions could ſhake the Martyrs reſolutions. Yet the officious *Roman* thought, that his Love would move relenting Impreſſions for that Beauty that had conqueſted his Heart, and therefore told him; it is not without regret, that I ſee your obſtinacy fruſtrate my endeavours for your ſafety. But tho' miſtaken Gallantry may make you think it below you to diſclaim a threatned Opinion, leſt it ſhould be imputed to fear or levity; yet deſtructive Gallantry ought not to oblige a young Lady, where Courage is neither required, nor a proper Vertue. And therefore I hope you will joyn with me, in perſwading her, not to throw her ſelf out of a World, where her grandeurs and pleaſures promiſe an extraordinary ſhare, as well as her Youth fits her to reliſh and enjoy them.

The Roman *endeavours* Theodoras's *diſwaſion.*

Didymus, though at the firſt ſurprized, ſoon returned this anſwer, I cannot be concerned, that

that your endeavours ſhould prove unſucceſful upon my Account. For though your Advice was obliging in you; yet it would be Criminal in me to accept it. And as for *Theodora* I cannot be acceſſary in tempting her, nor will I be guilty by ſolliciting another to commit a Crime; nor will I ruin my Innocence, without hopes of ſhaking her Vertue. Yet ſays the *Roman*, if you would joyn your Perſwaſions with mine, I doubt not, but ſhe would comply with a Perſon ſhe owes ſo much to, and ſo juſtly values.

If ſays *Didymus*, I ſhould be ſo Criminal as to be an Example of Apoſtacy, what you deſire might be leſs improbable, but to perſwade her to what I believe to be worſe than Death, would make her hate and deſpiſe me. And if I thought ſhe would be influenced by me, or that ſhe would offer to ſeduce me, it would alter my Opinion of Her. And though I might admire her external Beauty: yet there is a great Difference betwixt that which muſt ſubmit to Age or Death, and the value I have for her Inſtrinſick Worth and Vertue. Beſides ſhould I offer ſuch a Motion to ſo much Piety as Hers, it would give her a higher reſentment, than the Importunities of the Heathen Perſecutors; for theſe adviſe her to decline Danger, to accept what they think Truth; whereas what you would perſwade her to, would be to perſwade her to renounce what we both know to be Truth. Beſides ſuch a proceeding would oblige her to quit herſelf of thoſe Reſpects & Services which her Goodneſs vouchſafes ſome Title of Gratitude to.

There is a difference ſays the *Roman*, betwixt the Caſe of a reſolved Souldier, who thinks himſelf

ſelf in Honour not obliged to retreat, and that of a Young Lady, where reſoluteneſs and obſtinacy are not to be expected, ſo that I am apt to think, that our joynt perſwaſions might withhold her from Death, now ſhe is ſo near as to ſee the Horrors of it.

Says *Didymus*, what I ſay is not out of any averſeneſs, that I have, that you ſhould try your Fortune with *Theodora*'s Vertue. I do not envy, that her Conſtancy ſhould gain more than one Conqueſt in one day. But what I ſay is, to give my Reaſons why I would not joyn in the Attempt which I think impoſſible it ſhould ſucceed, ſhould I attempt what you propoſe, it would loſe my Intereſt with Her, were it greater than it is; and ſhe would be ſo averſe to Apoſtacy, that ſhe would hate the Adviſer. And as for being afraid to paſs out of the World, her long Exerciſes of Piety, have made her ſlight temporal Things, and being mortifyed to the Pleaſures and Vanities of the World, Death can do no more than free her from the Troubles of it. She hath ſpent her Life in preparing her ſelf to part with it, when Nature or Vertue require it, and ſhe will eaſily lay it down in her preſent Condition, when in Proſperity it was enough to wean her from the Love of it, that it detained her from the other; Great Vertues, like great Rivers, the nearer they come towards their end, the greater they grow, and the more difficult the ſtream is to be oppoſed. *Theodora* thinks ſhe is juſt entring upon that Crown, ſhe hath ſuffered ſo much for; and ſhe is ſo raviſhed at the ſight of it, that ſhe will not ſee or regard any thing that may delay her poſſeſſion of it.

Here

Here the *Roman* Officer impatient to hear any more, thus interrupted *Didymus*. Your diſcourſe ſeems to be of an Antient Heroe, rather than of a Lady, who had been uſed to deſpiſe the frowns of Fortune.

Heroick Vertue, ſays *Didymus*, is as little acquainted with Sexes, as with the Soul it reſides in; nor is habitude Eſſential to an Heroick Action, ſince the firſt is not the conſequence, but the beginning of that Habit; and a Reſolution to be vertuous, may make a Woman be, what ſubſequent Actions can only ſay ſhe hath been. And a Perſon that acts in the Preſence of a Deity, as *Theodora* does, may preſerve her Loyalty to God, and her Title to the rewards of Piety, by greater ſufferings, than what thoſe Heroes were moved to by Cuſtom, Ambition, or Revenge. And as for Menaces and Proffers, they are very unlikely to prevail with Chriſtians, poſſeſſed with divine Love and Hope, as *Theodora* is; nor can any thing bribe one, to quit the joys of Heaven, who is juſt entring upon the Poſſeſſion of them. Therefore deſire me not to joyn in an atttempt, which can neither be done with hopes or without a Crime, thinking it more worthy to imitate *Theodoras*'s Conſtancy, than to ſeduce her from it; therefore I chuſe rather to ſhare her Triumphs, than to be a Trophy.

Both commanded to be put to Death, their Speeches and Final Separations

The *Roman* Officer finding all his endeavours in vain, and that *Didymus*'s Conſtancy was more likely to affect the *Roman*, than that his Arguments ſhould prevail, diſcontentedly took his leave, thinking it impious to intercede for Perſons ſo obſtinate, or to divert the proceedings of

of the Judg; who having diſpatch'd his other buſineſs, called for the innocent Criminals, and asked, whether they were yet willing to appeaſe the provoked Deities, adding, that they muſt either renounce their Religion, or ſuffer Death.

To which the Priſoners gave their reſolute Anſwer: That they had worſhipped Chriſt, and had rather Dye than profeſs themſelves otherwiſe; and that they had rather be Victims to their falſe Gods, than adore them.

Upon this the Judg ordered them to be led to the place of Execution, and that the Preparations for their Execution ſhould be made ready forthwith. Whilſt the Officers were making preparations, *Theodora* took the opportunity to tell *Didymus*, it is fit when we talk with Infidels to give the Objects of our hopes, the Titles of Crowns and Triumphs, defending our Conſtancy, by the greatneſs of the Rewards; repreſenting thoſe Celeſtial Rewards as moſt noble and deſirable. But we may have a different Notion of Heaven amongſt our ſelves, and diſtinguiſh betwixt the Chriſtian *Paradiſe* and the Poets *Elyſium*. Our Triumphs in Heaven being not only over our Enemies and Perſonal Sufferings, but our Sin and Ignorance, & the Frailties of our Natures, as well as the Imperfections of our Vertues. And the poſitive Bleſſings of Heaven ſhould not be ſo much our being Crowned by Chriſt, but that we ſhall live with him, and *follow that ſpotleſs Lamb wherever he goes*: That our Gratitude ſhall be as perfect as the Bleſſings that engage it, and that we ſhall contemplate that *Son of Righteouſneſs* in a perpetual Day; without

without being vailed by interpoſing Clouds, much leſs by a Viciſſitude of Day and Night. In ſhort, our Devotion in a future State ought to aſpire to other things than the Objects of Ambition.

And now ſays *Theodora*, ſince we are entring upon the laſt Schene of our Lives, let us rouſe all the Graces and Vertues we have received from Heaven, and fervently deſire the Increaſe of them, and a Supply of what may be needful upon this Occaſion; that we may make a pious as well as a handſom Period, and ſuffer as becomes Chriſtian-Martyrs. Let no Inſults of our Perſecutors diſcompoſe us; but let them ſee, that they can as little diſcompoſe us in our way to Heaven, as hinder us from it. And let our Courage not look like ſullenneſs nor fierceneſs, but reſolution, and ſo calm and charitable, that we may ſeem Martyrs of our Religion, and not of our Glory and Courage; and let them not think, that we hate Life or deſpiſe it, but think we purchaſe Heaven at a dear rate, and think it an Honour to own and follow him, who took the Croſs in his way.

Theſe Pious and Chriſtian Admonitions were entertained with the juſt Veneration he had for the Giver, and which might be expected from ſo elevated a Soul, and one ſo devout as *Didymus*, whoſe reſolute Anſwers & Behaviour, ſhewing that he could not be prevailed on, neither to alter his Mind, or to tempt his M ſtreſs, he was firſt led away to Execution, that the ſight of his Example might fright *Theodora*, to take care of her own Preſervation. This Reſolution of theirs did not alter his, but having obtained leave

leave from the *Roman* Officer, who admired his Gallantry, and took Compaſſion on his Condition, to ſpeak to *Theodora*, with the greateſt Reſpects he told her; your Piety and Example, *Madam*, making me not doubt of your conſent to part with a Life that hath ever ſince I knew you been at your Diſpoſal, I am now juſt going to pay that laſt duty, which Religion calls me to. But thinking to begin with the moſt difficult part of my Martyrdom, before I left the World, I came to take my leave of the moſt Excellent Perſon in it. Could I pay you any further Duty, I ſhoud deſire the Honour of your Commands; but ſince it lyes no further in my Power, pleaſe to think my paſt Services, ſhort of the deſires of one who loved you with as much ardency as as your Charms could kindle, yet ſo pure, that *Theodora*'s Vertue could not diſapprove it. And though to reſcue you from your preſent Condition, I could hazard any danger, were I at Liberty; and though it were poſſible for me to ſurvive you, yet I have too much reſpect for *Theodora*, to wiſh her to blemiſh ſo ſpotleſs a Life to ſave it; only give me leave to wiſh, that ſome Expedient may be found, to preſerve both your Crown and your Head, and that before you arrive at Heaven, you may lead a long and an Exemplary Life on Earth, with as much Tranquility as Vertue, undiſturbed with the trouble I fear you may give your ſelf at the remembrance of your faithful Servant.

Theſe Words as well as the occaſion drew Tears into *Theodora*'s Eyes, and though the Cauſe of them was obliging to *Didymus*; yet being concerned at her diſquiet, he endeavoured to

ſuppreſs them; telling her, that it was a pity her Mind, which Vertue had kept calm, and Perſecution could not diſorder; ſhould be diſcompoſed by any thing elſe; And though your Charity will make it needleſs for me to beg your Prayers, I deſire you will now and then remember a Perſon, whoſe Mind you have been always preſent to; yet I muſt retract that Petition, except you will promiſe me not to diſquiet your ſelf with it. For though it is a Bleſſing to have a place in your Thoughts; yet the *Idea* muſt repreſent another Man than *Didymus*, that muſt be troubleſom to *Theodora*, whoſe compaſſion is both unneceſſary and undeſerved, ſince pity would be injurious to one that hath the Honour and Satisfaction of going to ſuffer in her ſight, what he partly does for her Service; and the place he deſires in her Favourable thoughts will afford him the nobleſt being he can enjoy upon Earth, when he ſhall be in Heaven.

The Pathetical Words, that *Didymus* made uſe of, had an Effect on *Theodora*, who upon other occaſions was undiſturbed. And conſidering them as the Laſt Dying Words of an accompliſhed Gentleman, who had ſo much ſerved and loved Her, ſhe could not forbear being more concerned than uſually. Wherefore with Eyes, though without Tears, which expreſſed an Extraordinary Grief, and with Looks which expreſſed both Gratitude and Obligations, ſhe told him. If I only eſteemed your Vertue as ſomewhat Extraordinary, I ſhould excuſe my ſelf, and ask your Pardon for being acceſſary to the loſs of ſo worthy a Perſon. But this days work

work makes me believe ſuch Diſcourſes would not be welcome, to one that delights in ſuch Actions. But think not that I conjure you, becauſe I pretend not to merit ſuch high Services, think me not inſenſible of their Greatneſs, nor the handſom manner you have done them in. For what you have done this day, if Providence thought fit to make me Capable of Retributions, I would have you to think, that in chuſing for you I would without reſerve, be guided by your wiſhes. Here ſhe pauſed a while, and Bluſhed at what her niceneſs thought too forward, yet queſtioned, whether ſhe ought not to have ſaid more. But her obliging looks expounded with her Eyes, what her words did not expreſs, and her Heart ſpoke in her Cheeks what her Tongue could not utter, ſo that ſhe did Juſtice to her Gratitude without wronging her Modeſty. *Didymus* thinking himſelf more highly recompenced by ſuppoſing her kindneſs than he could by another Love, Fancying by the fire that fluſhed in her Cheeks, ſuch a reſentment of his Services, as approved the Cauſe and implyed a reſpect for his Perſon; He took this for the higheſt Retribution from a Lady, whoſe Beauty and Modeſty were ſo great, that the leaſt Favour from her muſt be ſo too.

But *Theodora* ſoon recovering the Diſorder this Declaration had put her into, thus proceeded. But it is a ſatisfaction both to me, and I hope will be to you, that ſince we act upon the Account of Religion, you will not want a greater recompence, than it could be poſſible for me to give you; ſince in reſcuing me upon a Chriſtian account, you have a Maſter that is able

both to reward your Services and your ſufferings. And doubt not *Didymus*, but that when once you have received a Glorious Heavenly Crown, you will not think much of having left behind a Crown of Lawrel, or Myrtle. Were I to languiſh here below as many years as your miſtaken kindneſs could wiſh, I ſhould never ungratefully remember your kindneſſes, nor omit paying my acknowledgments in Memory, Eſteem and Friendſhip. But think not of my Surviving you, when holding out a few Minutes longer for Chriſt, will bring me where I ſhall ever ſee him, without offending him. Let us then leave the Thoughts of this World, we are going to quit, and fix them upon that which will be Eternal; and whilſt we are waiting for thoſe Crowns, let us behave our ſelves as becomes ſuch Expectations. And may our laſt Services to Religion by our Deaths, not only adorn but propagate it. And let our Perſecutions ſhew, that we not only are above them, but are undeſerving of them; imitating Chriſt's Example; and let us ſuffer like him, as it is for him, and then we need not doubt, but we ſhall joyfully meet together, in a better place and a happier Condition.

Theodora had ſcarce ended, when word was brought to *Didymus*, that all things were ready for his Execution; who, though unwilling to part with *Theodora*, delayed not to take his laſt farewel. Their ſeparation was with Geſtures ſo ſenſible and moving, that it troubled the Generous Lovers more, than that of Soul and Body, which was preſently to ſucceed. But *Didymus*, now finally parted from his Miſtreſs *Theodora*, by the aſſiſtance of one whom his Religion called

to

to him, aſſumed a temper of Mind, ſuitable to what he was about, and diſpoſed himſelf, when he had done what became a Lover, to do what became a Chriſtian; which his whole Life had diſpoſed him to do eaſily. For *Didymus* was ſo Famous for early Piety that he was a full grown Chriſtian, before he was a full grown Man. And as his moſt early Years were the fitteſt for the Objects of his Devotion, he could both ſuppreſs the Vanity of Youth and of the World, whilſt his Youth made the former moſt impetuous, and made the later the more endearing of Novelty. Nor was he leſs pious for being a Souldier. The Examples of *Joſhuah*, *David*, *Jonathan*, and others ſhew, that Heroick Valour and Piety are not inconſiſtent. The firſt Proſelyte to Chriſtianity in the Heathen World, was a Captain, and continued ſo after his Converſion, which ſhews, that a Man may be both a Souldier and a Chriſtian. And as *Didymus* fought not for Avarice, nor Ambition, nor out of Fierceneſs, but to exerciſe his Vertue, ſo in all his Conflicts he took care *to fight the good fight of Faith.* And being taught, that the Life of Man upon Earth is a kind of Military one, the *Roman* Camp was a School to a higher kind of Warfare. Where the Crowns & Triumphs are proportionably great to the difficulties. A Perſon thus qualifyed, could eaſily part with his Life, which he lived ſo well, for Religion, and to go to a place where he and *Theodora* were preſently to be crowned. Wherefore to let them know, that an Infamous Death could neither leſſen his Courage nor extinguiſh his Charity, he reſolved to mix the Courage of a Souldier with the reſignation of a Martyr. Wherefore walking to the Place of Execution

with a Courage undaunted and a juſt calmneſs, which were ſupported by Faith, when he came to the Place of Execution he looked upon the Spectators, as if he rather pityed them, than wanted theirs, which moved their Tears; he ſpeaking with all the Gracefulneſs, that might be expected from ſuch an Extraordinary Perſon; and ſuppoſing there might be ſome military Men that were Chriſtians amongſt them, he addreſſed himſelf to them, intimating, that he pretended not to inſtruct them as Chriſtians, that having been already done by the Teachers of the Goſpel; but would confine his Advice to what was ſuitable to Chriſtian Souldiers. Therefore he briefly exhorted them to all thoſe Chriſtian Vertues and Practices, that might recommend both their Profeſſion and Religion. The laſt he endeavoured to perſwade them to adorn even with their Lives, if they were called to it, the fearful in the Scripture being reckoned with the *Unbelievers*, *Rev.* 21. 8. being doomed to the ſame Place of Torments, without fearing unmerited Diſgrace, or the merited One, threatned by the *Captains of their Salvation* to them that *ſhall deny him before Men*, *Heb.* 11. 10. He exhorted them by their Courage and Reſignation to convince their unbelieving Superiours, that Chriſtians could be active when their Religion obliged them not to be paſſive; and that upon a juſt occaſion, though never ſo difficult, they could imitate, nay they could outdo thoſe Deifyed Heroes they refuſed to Worſhip. And laſtly, enjoyning Loyalty to the Emperor, he adviſed them to be obedient as far as their fidelity to God would allow. He begged their Prayers,

Prayers, and offered his own for the Church, the State, his Perſecutors, and for his Excellent Companion of Martyrdom. Then he prepared for the Deliverance of his Soul and Body, with ſo much Serenity of Mind and Looks, that thoſe that deſtroyed him could not but eſteem him; and then the Executioner did his Part, which probably was by taking off his Head, and paſſed from being one of the Church Militant, to be one of the Church Triumphant.

Theodora's Perſecutors, in hopes to fright her, had placed her where ſhe might ſee what was done, her Vertue and Friendſhip making her a fellow ſufferer, praying that he might be divinely ſupported and crowned. But whilſt ſhe was Solemnizing her loſs, thoſe who had procured it, endeavouring to make uſe of ſuch terrifying Impreſſions, advanced to *Theodora* with the disfigured remains of *Didymus*, telling her, that neither Youth nor Gallantry could ſecure them from the Anger of the Gods, that refuſed to worſhip them, and therefore adviſed her by a ſeaſonable Care of her ſelf, to prevent ſuch a Tragical Example. *Theodora* anſwered, that ſhe was neither terrifyed nor ſurprized at what had paſſed. For both *Didymus* and all other Chriſtians, duly conſidered the Conſequences of a perſecuted Religion, before they embraced it; knowing what it might coſt them, and that it deſerved a higher Price; nor were they ſurprized at it, when they were going to receive what they had purchaſed. To which ſhe added, that *Didymus*'s Martyrdom ought rather to confirm in her Religion, than frighten her from it, which he was willing to dye for; and

Theodora alſo ſuffered Martyrdom.

much leſs perſwade her to forſake it, to preſerve her Life; notwithſtanding all he had done to ſhew his concern for her. His Example lets me ſee, that no force upon Earth can move that Courage that is aſſiſted by Heaven, and hath it's Glories in view. His Death ſhews, how quick the Paſſage is, betwixt this and a better Life, and how ſoon your Cruelty ſets thoſe that deſpiſe it, above the power of it; ſhould you, ſays ſhe, looking upon his Body, act any further inhuman Cruelty upon this Carcaſs, now his Soul hath eſcaped, he will not feel the intended miſchief, except by a more plentiful Reward of his Martyrdom. And though you inſult over his dead Body, yet while you are triumphing over his Death, and others are deploring it, I doubt not but the Joys he hath met with, have made him happy enough to pity both thoſe that hate him, and thoſe that pity him too. What you ſhew as a Trophy of your Power, I take to be one of his Conſtancy; and for your Victory he will be Crowned. The Grave indeed may be a ſad Proſpect to thoſe that look no further than it, but not to thoſe that look at the Glories beyond it, to which Death is the neareſt, but Martyrdom the nobleſt way; wherefore, ſays *Theodora*, you will be miſtaken, if you think that Death beſmeared with *Didymus* his Blood, can frighten me into Apoſtacy; for I am more encouraged by his Example, than terrifyed by his Fate, and as I always valued this World too little, to be afraid to exchange it for a better, ſo I ſhall never forſake an Excellent Religion for a bad one, for fear of parting with a wretched Life for a happy one. This

This Declaration ſo enraged thoſe that thought to terrify *Theodora* with *Didymus*'s Death, that they preſently led her away to participate of his Fate, who readily obeyed. And conſidering, that ſhe was about to part with a wretched Life, and to enter into the happineſs of Heaven, through the readieſt and moſt Noble way; her Beauty appeared more ſhining than ever, encreaſed by the Effuſions of Celeſtial Joys, which abounding in her Heart, fluſhed into her Cheeks, which added ſo much Luſtre and Majeſty, that ſhe ſeemed to be come from Heaven, the place ſhe was going to. So much Conſtancy and Cheerfulneſs of Mind, wanted not the like Effect upon the wondering Aſſiſtants. For though her Fame, and the Nobleneſs of the Action, had drawn together abundance of Spectators, all admired her, and few without Tears. Every Spectator found ſomething that moved their Compaſſion. The Chriſtians lamented the loſs of ſo great an Ornament, and ſo good an Example; hoping to follow her in a little time into the happy place ſhe was going to: Nor was it a leſs Reputation to their Religion, that ſuch a Lady had lived ſo, according to the ſtricteſt Laws of it, than that a Perſon of her Youth, was ambitious to Dye for it. And thoſe *Romans*, who had any thing of the Noble *Roman* Spirit, were troubled to ſee a Female Heroe puniſhed for Generoſity, which could not be ſufficiently rewarded; and brought to an Ignominious End, for Gratitude and Piety. And thoſe Infidels, who were more influenced with Vertue than Superſtition, diſſatisfyed with the rigour of their Magiſtrates, thought

thought it barbarous to uſe ſuch Courſes to fright Men to their Religion, thinking it invidious to the Gods, to deſtroy their moſt admirable Works, but thoſe moſt deplored her Condition, whoſe Affections are chiefly influenced by their Eyes and her Beauty. *Didymus* was envied for ſuffering for ſo rare a Perſon, who they thought deſerved to be as happy, as her Smiles could make her Adorers. Moſt indeed were grieved, to ſee ſo Youthful and Beautiful a Captive deſtroyed in *Greece*, by *Romans*; ſo that all deplored her, except the Barbarians that brought her thither. And by their Looks one would have judged the Aſſiſtants Sufferers, and her only a Spectator.

And now being arrived at the Place of Execution, ſhe firſt looked with pity on thoſe, that never or later were to be admitted to the ſame Felicity, ſhe was going to poſſeſs. And after a Pauſe, ſeeing her ſelf ſurrounded with Gazers, her baſhfulneſs made it uneaſy to ſpeak to the Aſſiſtants, rather becauſe her Speech was to be publick, than becauſe it was to be her laſt, yet with a Voice and Geſtures becoming both a Virgin and a Martyr; ſhe thus addreſſed her ſelf to them about her.

Since it is expected, that thoſe that come to this Place, ſhould make a publick Confeſſion of their Guilt, or a Declaration of their Innocence; I ſhall in part do both. And *firſt*, I own my ſelf a Chriſtian, in ſpight of all my Sufferings, and think it an honour to be ſo. But I have transgreſſed no other *Roman* Laws, but what are repugnant to God and Reaſon. And ſince Chriſtianity teaches us to forgive and love our Enemies,

Enemies, and to pray for our Perſecutors; I not only forgive the Procurers of my Death, but implore for them the Bleſſing of an unmoleſted Religion, which they ſee I value more than my Life. And I hope thoſe in Authority will at the laſt ſee, how ineffectual and inhuman a way they take to extirpate Chriſtianity, which being a Light from Heaven, can be no more ruined by Violence, than Tempeſts can extinguiſh the Sun. And as Charity or Curioſity may have brought ſome Chriſtians here, I ſhall now addreſs my ſelf to them, not deſiring their Pity, but their Prayers, that I may overcome the laſt Enemy, Death, and *finiſh my Courſe*, ſo as neither to blemiſh my Life, nor the Cauſe I dye for. But my Principal requeſt reſpects your ſelves; that you conſider, that beſides God Almighty, there are a great many Eyes upon you, that endeavour to find your Actions Criminal; and though the Truth or Subſtance of Chriſtianity does not, yet it's Credit depends much upon the Nature of your Actions. For as your Faults will be imputed to Religion, your Vertues may convert Infidels, that Religion being eſteemed Excellent, that makes it's Profeſſors ſo. If you live ſo, you will not much fear Martyrdom, which will but ſo much the ſooner make you Poſſeſſors of your Reward; and I hope you will never want Courage to enter at that ſtreight Gate I am going to paſs; which if you be called to it, let neither Ignominy nor Pain deter you. It is not ſhameful to ſuffer for God, Truth, and a Crown, and my Example may convince you, that *God's Strength will be made Manifeſt in your Infirmity*, and the weakeſt Hand may

may reſiſt a Temptation, ſupported by an Almighty Arm. And though Heaven and Earth, a Mortal and Immortal State, are very diſtant, yet the paſſage is ſhort, and a little time will conveigh us from the Perſecutions of our Adverſaries, to the Congratulations of Angels, and the joyful welcom of God himſelf.

When ſhe had thus ended, though her Soul except in Heaven, could ſcarce find an advantage by a Change, yet it cheerfully diſpoſed it ſelf for ſeparation, which would ſoon unite it with the Divine Object of it's Love, and when ſhe had calmly diſpoſed her ſelf to this laſt Action of her Life, ſhe made it like the reſt, an act of Piety and Charity. And therefore lifting her Hands and Eyes towards Heaven, ſhe firſt thanked God for the Grace and Opportunity he had vouchſafed her, *not only to believe in his Son, but to ſuffer for him*, and then made a ſhort Prayer, for the Church, her Enemies and her Self. After which, with Serenity and Joy, ſhe gave a ſign to the Executioner to do his Office, who ſoon compleated her Martyrdom; her glad Soul being by Angels conveighed to that happy place, whoſe Glories are not to be conceived, by thoſe that have not ſeen them, 1 *Cor.* 11. 9. nor deſcribed by thoſe that enjoy Supernatural Felicities, as much tranſcending Man's *Ideas* and Expreſſions, as they do his Merit.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Containing ſome Motives and Incentives to the Love of God, in a Letter a Friend.

I am not a little pleaſed, that *Harmiones* cold Uſage hath mitigated the Flame her Eyes had kindled, Deareſt *Lindamor*, and when you was reſerved to ſhew, what wonders her Eyes could perform, you rather ſhewed the Power of Reaſon, than Love; fruſtrating your Miſtreſſes vain hopes, that her Charms could continue your Flame, when a Change had made it cauſeleſs as well as hopeleſs. I wiſh indeed your Cure was intirely the Effect of your Reaſon and leſs of Reſentment. But ſince Satisfaction without allays are too Heavenly, to enjoy them on Earth. I congratulate your Recovery on theſe Terms. Liberty is too great a Bleſſing to loſe it's Nature by Circumſtances, and *Hermione* having intentionally diſobliged you and not in event, hath made you a better return, in reſtoring your own Heart, than, if ſhe had exchanged her own. And I am the better pleaſed that my endeavours conduced to it, ſucceſs being never more Welcom, than to ſerve *Lindamor*. And tho' I can never do you great Services, yet it is a delight to do you any. And though my Diſcourſes may be with more deſire than hopes of ſucceſs, yet I cannot leave the means uneſſayed, being invited to excite you to greater hopes than I could allow my ſelf for you, by the Example of Generals, who, notwithſtanding the *The Introduction.*

the Doubts they may have in their own Breasts encourage the Souldiers to fight, by florid Orations, which may make them hope for Success. For though Reason is sometimes over-powered by the Passions, yet as she is born Sovereign of them, she may be able to resume her Native Power, and recover the Prerogative she hath lost. And though I was willing to encourage you, that it was easy to finish what your resentment had begun, and that the Victory was as easy as the Attempt, yet I once thought, that to attempt the Cure of a Lover was as much a weakness, as the being one. And I am apt to think, that the Circumstances of your recovery are not without danger of a Relapse, and that you have not quitted your Amorous Disposition of Mind, though you have the Idol of it. I know from one, that hath never been hurt by *Cupid*, you may expect Perswasions to prevent a Relapse; and such Arguments against Love, as it's Votaries will scarce allow so mild a Title to as Invectives. And indeed I have sometimes been Satyrist enough, to endeavour to disabuse those Servile Souls, who being born to Reason, only boast an Excess of Passion; and had such narrow thoughts of Happiness and Misery as to expect either from a Womans Usage. And this I thought I might the more freely do, because having never known the Infelicities of Love, except by others sufferings, my Declaiming might be taken for the Effect of Reason and not Revenge. But though some Mens folly hath been so great, that I could not avoid laughing at it, yet I am not so much an Enemy to Love, except in excess or misplaced,

to

to repreſent the Nobleſt Paſſion of the Mind, as a hideous and formidable Diſeaſe.

How far our Love ought to be moderated.

Paſſionately to love a Perſon you would Marry, is both requiſite and expedient, to fix your Affections, where you have engaged your Faith; for Love is ſeldom confined, except by Matches of it's own making; and few that ſee not Cauſe enough to be in Love beforehand, prove conſtant afterwards. Since therefore the Marriage of a Wiſe Man ſuppoſes as much Love, as he can be capable of, without Looſing that Title; to be moderately in Love cannot but be injurious to Marriage, which is a State I can more eaſily allow others, than contract it my ſelf; yet I cannot condemn ſuch a condition of Life, as if it were expedient to none, ſince without that, Paradiſe and Innocence could not compleat the Happineſs of *Adam*. Thus though I condemn not all ſorts of Love, yet I would poſſeſs you with this Truth; that as the Jews, had Odoriferous Unguents, which were both uſual and uſeful to anoint themſelves with, or their Friends; ſo there was a certain Compoſition, which was to be employed only in God's Service, to perfume their Friends with which, was Criminal and Sacrilegious, *Exod.* 30. 31, 32. ſo there are certain degrees of Love for a Friend, a Miſtreſs, or a Wife, yet there is a peculiar heroick Temperament of Love, which juſtly belongs to God. A Vertuous Wife may love both her Husbands Relations and her own, and yet love him with her whole Heart; there being a peculiar unrivaled ſort of Love, which conſtitutes true Conjugal Affections, which ſhe reſerves intirely for him, and would be Criminal

to

to harbour for any other Perſon. Thus a Religious Perſon may love God intirely, though ſhe allow her Affections other Objects; provided they be ſubordinate, and enter not in Competition with that Love, which is appropriated to him; reſulting from a high Elevation, and vaſtneſs of Affection, proceeding from an entire reſignment, and an abſolute dependance on the Loved Party, depending on a reſtleſs diſquiet on the leaſt ſenſe of her Diſpleaſure, or a greater concern in her Intereſt than ones own, expecting either Felicity, or to be wretched from her Friendſhip or Indignation; or a perſwaſion, that nothing can be greater happineſs than her Favour, or be ſaid to be a happineſs without it. For when a Paſſion hath theſe, or any of theſe Properties conſpicuous, by being conſecrated to God, it can be neither injurious to him nor it ſelf; its Nobility entitules it to him; as in ſome Countries, courſer ſort of Metals belong to the owners of the Ground, but the Nobleſt Metals are by the Law-Mines Royal, and belong to him, their value appropriating them to him. This peculiar Notion of Love will help to interpret ſome indefinite Expreſſions, in the following diſcourſe. And this Love we ſtyle *Seraphick Love*, borrowing the Expreſſion from thoſe Nobler Celeſtial Spirits, whoſe Names in the Language they are expreſſed in, making them of a flaming Nature, and whoſe Employment, mentioned in the Prophets Myſterious Viſion, *Iſa.* 6. 2, 3. reſpects the Divine Object, to which the flames aſpire

The Name *Seraphim*, in Hebrew, ſprings from the Root *Saraph*, which ſignifies to burn or flame: Whence, *Numb* 21. 6. thoſe pernicious Creatures, that our Tranſlators Engliſh, *Fiery Serpents*, are ſtyled in the Original, *Hannechaſim has-ſeraphim.*

aſpire and tend. And it can be no ſmall Invitation to *Seraphick Love*, that by being their Rivals, you may make thoſe Glorious Spirits your Friends, and have the Honour of a Service with ſuch Illuſtrious Concurrents, eſpecially if you are of that Youths Mind, who would not run at the Olympick Games, becauſe there were no Monarchs to run with him.

But we ſhall not here declaim againſt Love in general, or the fickleneſs of Women; and therefore, as when young Gallants are apt to miſplace their Love on unfit Objects, their Friends, (knowing the Truth of the *Italian* Comicks Obſervation, that

Oneſtà contra' amore
E troppo frale ſchermo
In giovinetto cuore.

In youthful Hearts bare Vertue's wont to prove
But a weak ſhield againſt the darts of Love.)

without minding their former ſtragling Paſſions more than neceſſary, reclaim them, either by Marriage, or engage their Addreſſes to Perſons, whoſe Beauty and Prerogatives may confine their Affections; ſo *Lindamor*, I ſhall endeavour to reſtrain your Love from Objects that cannot deſerve one ſo tranſcendent and diſintereſted, by prefering it to the true Object that Paſſion was born to, the nobleſt it can aim at, and one that will afford the moſt ſatisfaction. I ſee Love is too Noble and Pre-

dominant an Affection in *Lindamor*, to be eaſy or fit to be deſtroyed; therefore I ſhall not endeavour to ſuppreſs but addreſs your flame. And though I would withdraw it from *Hermione*, yet I would not annihilate it, but transfigure it; nor ſhould a Paſſion which wants nothing but an Object to make it *Seraphick Love*, be ſwallowed up by Death, that common fate, but be elevated like that of *Enoch* and *Elias*, who ceaſing their Converſe with Mortals, without dying, were tranſlated into Heaven.

The Love of God the way to remove our Love from Mortals.

What hath been ſaid may ſhew, how your Love hath been miſplaced upon unfit Objects, therefore we ſhall proceed to a new Theme, (minding what hath been ſaid by an Eminent Father, *Nemo aliquem amat, quem non vult eſſe meliorem*;) and endeavour to ſettle your Paſſion on an Object, whoſe Contemplation may remove any damage done by Mortal Beauty; as formerly the ſight of the Myſterious Serpent on the Pole, cured the Wounds of the fiery Serpent, *Numb. c.* 21. *v.* 8, 9. To gaze on Beauty, which ſtill proves to be but the ſame Face, is the way to kindle and blow the fire of Love. How much then muſt due Contemplation on the Divine and Refulgent; yet evermore diſcoverable Object by due attention and wonder, mutually excite and cheriſh it? Hence the moſt perfect and zealous Lovers of God, are the Angels who *always behold*, as our Saviour ſays, *the Face of his Father which is in Heaven*, *Mat.* 18. 20. and the employment and happineſs of thoſe Bleſſed Saints in the *Revelations* is ſaid to be, *to follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goes*, *Rev.* 14. 4. and thoſe bleſſed Perſons have kept

kept themſelves undefiled by Mortal Beauties, which may ſhew us, that the nearer Intuition Heaven affords us, of that moſt Glorious Object of our Paſſion, which is not only the Cauſe but the Recompence, the leſs we are in danger of Mortal Beauty; for thoſe Saints, whilſt on Earth, by the help of ſuch Speculations, lived, *as ſeeing him who is inviſible*, *Heb.* 11. 27. the ſight of whoſe Glorious Beauty made them look unconcerned on fading Beauty.

The Paſſion of Love may diſpoſe our Minds to the Love of Sublimer Objects.

To engage you to this ſublimeſt of Objects, I would have all I have offered to divert you from your former flames, and all that I may ſay to diſcredit thoſe diſquieting Amours be looked upon as we deſign them, rather as Preparatives than as Motives, deſigning to diſabuſe and rectify your Mind, that your compoſed Thoughts may judg of the propoſed Object. Thus the *Platoniſts* uſed to premiſe certain Vertues as Preparatives, to diſpoſe the Mind to ſublimer Truths; and thus Phyſitians purge the Head, to carry off thoſe darkning Tinctures which hinder the Eye from diſcerning Objects. And nothing can make the Love I propoſe more readily accepted, than the clearneſs of our ſight, and the illuſtration of the Object, the cleareſt Reaſon being the beſt Light to diſcern it by. A witty Girl uſed to wiſh her Lover all the good Qualities but a good Underſtanding, ſaying, that would make him out of conceit with her. But the Object I would prefer, is in no ſuch danger, it not being requiſite to diſparage any other, to recommend this; for the Creator is too full of Perfections to want the Creatures Defects to recommend him. He was ſo

lovely of himself, before he communicated the Passion of Love to us, that the giving it us hath not made him the unfitter Object of it. To love God, because your Mistress hath Faults, is, as if the *Persians* in their Religion, worshipped the Sun, because the Moon hath Spots and Blemishes. I had so much respect for *Hermione*, that I could not without concluding her an extraordinary Person, remember, how she had the Honour to captivate *Lindamor*, and though she hath forfeited, by injuriously declining, the Title of his Mistress, yet the Qualities that made her so, gave me occasion to like her so well, that my only Quarrel with her is, that she did not continue so; and therefore, whatever I may say to her disadvantage, only relates to her as she may or hath been a diversion to his *Seraphick Love*. To engage you to which, *Lindamor*, I must tell you, that God deserves the highest of your Love, though *Hermione* had not rejected it. Were she as Beautiful as you thought her, and as Constant, her Beauty and Friendship would but make her an injurious and disadvantageous Rival to God, and her most obliging favours could but have deserved a moderate degree of your Passion. Angels whom Women were never false to, love God above all things; and the Angel St. *John* offered his Adoration to, directed it to God, refusing it himself, *Rev.* 22. 4 and 19. 1. Would you not have thought *Hermione* handsom, though *Moors* are black, and some Women are deformed? Indeed we are so frail, that as the *Israelites* wanted Bondage in *Ægypt*, to make them turn to the Land of *Canaan*, so often the disdain of a Mistress, is requisite

requiſite to make us aſpire to a more genuin and meritorious Object. Therefore tho' *Hermiones* Defects, may move you to conſider *Seraphick Love*, I cannot allow them to be the Motives of embracing it; for it would be an Injury to ſo glorious an Object, to make it the refuge of a defeated Paſſion, it's Tranſcendency entituling it to more than the moſt elevated and entire one. God needs no compariſons to recommend him to our Love; and though there are Ladies whoſe Excellences adorn their Sex, yet their greateſt Accompliſhments, compared to his Perfections, are as inconſpicuous as the fainter Qualities of ordinary Perſons, are in theirs. And though divers of God's Attributes are participated by his Creatures, through his goodneſs, yet the Scripture makes a vaſt difference betwixt the Perfections aſcribed to Men, and the ſame as they exiſt in God, ſo that created Beings are abſolutely excluded from thoſe Attributes, poſſeſſing them in ſuch an inferiour manner to that Tranſcendent one, which belongs to God. Thus our Saviour ſaid, *why calleſt thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God*, *Mat.* 19. 16, 17. and St. *Paul* call'd God the only Potentate, 2 *Tim.* 6. 15. though the Earth be governed by ſeveral Potentates. And the devout Eunuch, *Acts* 8. 17. and the depoſed Grandees, *Luke* 1. 52. are in the Original ſtyled Potentates. And though there be wiſe Virgins as well as fooliſh, *Mat.* 25. 5. our Saviour tells us, that *the Children of this World are in their Generation wiſer than the Children of Light*, *Luke* 16. 8. yet St. *Paul* ſtyles his Maker *the only wiſe God*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. and elſewhere he ſays, by way of Paraphraſe,

phraſe, *He that only hath Immortality*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 16. Though Angels and Human Souls are not ſubject to Death; God's Nature poſſeſſing thoſe Excellences in ſo incommunicable a manner, which his diffuſive Goodneſs diſpoſes him in ſome meaſure to communicate. And as your Paſſion is impatient of Confinement, *Lindamor*, I am the more zealous to transfigure it, and few can deſerve better an Object for their Love, for which too immenſe a Love is impoſſible. And God is ſuch, whoſe Perfections make it impoſſible for him to be loved too much, that it's moſt aſpiring Paſſion, can ſcarce diminiſh it's diſproportion to the Object. Other Paſſions, like Rivers, are moſt admired when they flow within the juſt limits of their Banks. But in *Seraphick Love*, Inundations like thoſe of Nile, make it the more welcome: our Paſſions for Mortal Creatures, are proportioned to our ſelves, and whatever exceeds the certain ſize and ſtandard is called Monſtrous; but Devotion like a flawleſs Diamond, is valued more for it's Bigneſs. To beſtow all our Love upon God, is both the Command of the Law and the Goſpel, Devotion being faulty only in one Extreme, which is that of Defect; and Mediocrity which in other Paſſions is an Excellency, in this is an Imperfection; and as it makes thoſe Vertues, the boundleſsneſs of this alone makes it one. The Man after God's own Heart, *Pſ.* 42. 1. acknowleged the Ardency of his Love, which is metaphorically expreſſed, by the word Thirſt, which makes the Heart pant for thoſe refreſhing Streams, for want of which ſhe is in a gaſping Condition. *My very Soul*, ſays he, *v.* 2. *thirſteth*

for

for God. And Thirſt is ſuch a violent Appetite, that no wonder a Monarch parted with his Kingdom, for a Cup of Water; and indeed, Thirſt ſo confines our Appetites to what it deſires, that the Wealth of the *Indies*, would not excuſe a Cup of Water; beſides Thirſt is not leſſened as other inconveniences are, by it's continuance, but grows more inſupportable. The Pſalmiſt further profeſſes ſuch a ſenſible concern for God's Intereſt, that *the zeal of God's Houſe had eaten him up*, and is much concerned not to find the ſame zeal in others, *I beheld*, ſays he, *the Trangreſſors, and was grieved, becauſe they kept not thy Word*, Pſalm 119. 158. *Rivers of Waters run down my Eyes, becauſe they keep not thy Law, v.* 136. and to ſhew how much he eſteemed them his Friends, that were ſo to God, he ſays, *mine Eyes ſhall be upon the faithful of the Land, that they may dwell with me; he that walketh perfect in the way, he ſhall ſerve me*, Pſalm. 101. 6. *Do not I hate them O Lord, that hate thee, and am I not grieved with thoſe that riſe up againſt thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred, I count them mine Enemies. Pſal.* 139. 21, 22. Thus pious *David* loved his Maker, which he was ſo far from thinking an Exceſſive Degree, that he not only praiſed God with all his own Faculties, but invites all the Godly to joyn with him; *bleſs the Lord O my Soul, and all that is within me bleſs his holy Name*, Pſalm 103. 1. *Love the Lord all ye Saints, for*, &c. Pſ. 117. 1. and *Praiſe the Lord all ye Nations, praiſe him all ye People*, and further, *Pſalm* 138. 2. he invites the Angels and all the Hoſt of God, concluding the Pſalm thus, *let every thing that hath Breath praiſe the Lord.*

The Love of God hinders not a due Love for other Objects.

Nor does it invalidate what we have ſaid, that ſome Perſons have been blamed for too much Devotion, the want of Diſcretion, not the Exceſs of Love being guilty of their Faults. Our Love to God ought to be regulated by his Revealed Will, and not our wild Fancies; *If you Love me keep my Commandments*, ſays Chriſt, and therefore it is poſſible to be too Devout, not that any Expreſſions of *Seraphick Love* can be too ardent, conſidered abſtractedly, and irrelatively to the reſt; but becauſe there are ſeveral Duties of Love, which require an ardency, ſo that it is injurious to exerciſe all our Love upon that alone, which belongs to other neglected Objects. We are not to daſh the two Tables of the Law one againſt another, but muſt *love God with all our Hearts*, and yet we muſt *love our Neighbours as our ſelves.* You know what our Saviour ſays, *Mat.* 23.23. to the Phariſees, who tythed Mint and Cummin, neglecting the weighrier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy and Faith, *theſe ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone.* And this Partiality in diſplaying the vigour of our Spirits in ſome Favourite Duties, ſo that we can but languidly perform others, is like a Diſtemper in Children called the Rickets, where ſome Parts are ſufficiently ſupplyed with Nouriſhment, and have their full Growth, whilſt others receiving leſs Nouriſhment than they ought to do, grow not proportionably; which makes the whole Body diſproportionate and miſhapen. But it does not hence follow, that we can love God too well, but that we may employ too much of that Love in particular ways of expreſſing it. Whilſt, as

Job ſays, we *inhabit theſe Houſes of Clay*, *Job.* 4. 19. there are other Duties beſides thoſe to God that require our Attention. St. *Paul* tells us, that there is a difference betwixt Married and Single Perſons, 1 *Cor.* 7. 32, 33, 34. the Affections of the one being at Liberty to devout themſelves to God, thoſe of the other being diſtracted. But where the Love of God, defrauds not other Duties, there is no danger of exceſs. Though Prayers may be too long, and Faſts exorbitant, yet Chriſt Prayed all the Night, and faſted forty Days, that neither hindering Expreſſions of Love to his Father, nor other Exerciſes of Meditation, but rather promoting them. And thus *Elijah*, 1 *Kings* 19. 2. could faſt long without a fault, when it obſtructed not his Journey to the Mount of God. And though juſt Men expreſs their Love to their Maſter by improving the Talent committed to them; yet when a ſeparation ſhall free them from their Duties to diſtreſſed Chriſtians, and their ſecular Relations, which are here their Duties, their Glorifyed Spirits may ſpend Eternity in converſing with God, and following the Lamb whereſoever he goes. And agreeable to this, I obſerve, that the four Myſterious Beaſts, *Rev.* 4. 6, 7. allowed to come neareſt to the Throne of God, though their Numerous Wings and Eyes, intimates them of a very active Nature, yet they are repreſented as addicted to but one employment, *v.* 8. *ceaſing neither day nor night from ſaying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty*, and from giving *Glory, Honour and Thanks unto him.* And *thoſe that have whited their Robes in the Blood of the Lamb*, *are*

 ſaid

ſaid to be, *before the Throne of God, and ſerve him Day and Night in his Temple. Rev.* 5. 14, 15. So that no degree of *Seraphick Love*, can be exceſſive, nor Expreſſions of it immoderate, unleſs it engroſſes what belongs to other Objects. Our Love to the Creatures is a Preſent, but to God it is a Tribute, and though we may eaſily be too Prodigal in parting with our Gifts, we ſcarce can be ſo in paying our Debts; Acts of Juſtice being no profuſeneſs. *Seraphick Love* then comes neareſt it's nobleſt meaſures, when it can leaſt be meaſured; nor ought there to be any other Limits of it's Extent, than a Diſability of exceeding thoſe that terminate it. He Loves God as much as he ought, who loves him as much as he can, and endeavours to make amends for it's Imperfections, by being concerned it is no greater. This Sublimity of Love will be the beſt way to ſecure that Conſolation, that *God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God, and God in him,* 1 *John* 4. 16. which may move us to aſpire at a Tranſcendency in Devotion, ſince it will eaſily make us Maſters of ſelf denial; for this Sublimer Love being wholly devoted to it's Object, and refined from the Droſs of Intereſt, unites our Wills with God's, or begets a Submiſſion to them. And thus, when your will is to obey his, no Diſpenſations of Providence will much diſquiet you, for you poſſeſs your wiſhes in general, though not ſingly; for it being your deſire, your Makers Will ſhould be fulfilled, your knowledg that he is the Diſpoſer of Events tells you, that all Accidents are the accompliſhments of his Will, and conſequently of your own, as it is compriſed

priſed in his. When you have reſigned your Will to God, and entruſted him to Will for you, his Diſpenſations are the Acts of your own Will, with this Advantage, that they are directed and ſpecifyed by him; which at once aſſure us of their rectitude and ſucceſs. And conſidering God's Wiſdom, Power and Love, how much more happy muſt his choice be than our own. A Patient thinks himſelf obliged to the Phiſitian for ordering him a ſufficient Dyet, though he be deprived of what he beſt likes, and is ſometimes confined to what he loaths. God might ſay to ſeveral of our Requeſts, as Chriſt did to his ambitious Diſciples, *ye know not what ye ask*? And I cannot but admire ſo heavenly a a Leſſon in a Heathen *Satyriſt*, as,

Permittes ipſis expendere Numinibus, quid
Conveniat nobis, rebuſq; ſit utile noſtris:
Nam pro Jucundis Utilia quaque dabunt Di,
Charior eſt illis homo, quam ſibi: nos animorum
Impulſu, & caca pravaq; cupidine ducti,
Conjugium petimus, partumq; Uxoris; at illis
Notum, qui pueri, qualiſq; futura ſit uxor.

Unto the Wiſer God's the care permit,
Of what's for us and our Affairs moſt fit.
They will for Pleaſant things the beſt confer;
To whom Man is, than to himſelf, more dear.
We by our blinder Paſſions led aſtray,
Do for a Wife perhaps or Children pray:
Which they may chance refuſe us out of Love,
Knowing what both the Wife and Boys would prove.

This

This made a Heathen Philoſopher ſay, he uſed only to ask the Gods good things in general Terms, leaving it to them, what things were good for him. Our own wiſhes are commonly as blind as *Rachels*, who having earneſtly wiſhed for Children, cryed, *give me Children or elſe I Dye*, *Gen.* 35. 18. and died in Child-bearing. And as deſtructive to the wiſhers, as their longings were to the murmuring Iſraelites, who loathing the wholeſom Manna, that *Bread of Angels*, *Numb.* 11. 33. which God had provided, were their own Bane in the Fleſh, they ſo greedily luſted after. And indeed, ſince God hath ſo much ſatisfaction in the accompliſhment of his Will, a reſignment to it will afford us ſo much felicity, proportionable to the degree of reſignment; and as the Eye, whilſt joyned to the Optick Nerve, can taſte delights, which it cannot when ſeparated; ſo your Will by an identity or ſameneſs with your Makers, being engrafted into Gods, may receive a new Capacity, and be enlarged which will make you reliſh Joys, highly tranſcending thoſe, which your private wiſhes could give you expectations of. And thus ſelf-denial, like an aſſociation with God, gives you an intereſt in all his happineſs and acquiſitions. Thus Saints and Angels, whoſe Wills are more exquiſitely conformable to Gods, enjoy a happineſs more like his; whereas the Apoſtate Spirits, who are repugnant to his Will, find the extremity of wretchedneſs.

The advantages of Seraphick above Ordinary Love.

But to ſhew further the advantagious difference betwixt *Seraphick Love* and ordinary Flames, he that preſents his Heart to Mortal Beauty, expoſes it to be wounded in her Breaſt, and

and thoſe Misfortunes become his, which would otherwiſe terminate in her, and the felicity of two Perſons grows requiſite to make one happy. Expoſing our Hearts to mutable Objects, enlarges the Mark for Fortune, and makes it liable to be wounded in more places; for tho' Love may make us partakers of the Joys as well as the Infelicities of the Parties loved; yet the moſt happy in this fickle and tempeſtuous World, meet with ſo many more ſtormy than proſperous Gales, and we are ſo much more ſenſible of pleaſure than pain, that even Friendſhip, which is a much calmer affection than Love, ought to be avoided, as injurious to our quiet, as it is a partnerſhip of Fortune, not as it is an exerciſe of Vertue. But he who fixes his Love on God, is by the immutable happineſs of that Object, ſecured from being a partner of Infelicities; beſides his perſonal Croſſes and Diſtreſſes are ſoftned, by conſidering, that what he loves is moſt happy, and both able and willing to make him ſo. And *Seraphick Love* not only makes us partakers of his Felicities, but makes him reſent our Infelicities; *In all their Afflictions he was afflicted, Iſa.* 63. 3. And ſo the Son of God (who is ſo much won with them that love him, that, as he is the Head, and they are the Members, are ſometimes, making up one Body, called by one Name, Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 12. 12.) though above the reach of Perſonal Perſecutions, for the ſake of them that loved him, called out, *Saul, Saul, why Perſecuteſt thou me*, and the Prophet ſays to the returned *Iſraelites* concerning God, *he that touches you, touches the apple of his Eye, Zach.* 7. 8. Nor is God's Compaſſion,

paſſion, a grieving uſeleſs Pity, like a Miſtreſſes, being leſs comforted as it proceeds from kindneſs, than afflicted, becauſe it diſquiets her; for God's Compaſſion, without occaſioning diſcompoſure, hath the moſt ſenſible Effect of Pity, affording timely relief, for as *in all their Afflictions he was afflicted, ſo the Angel of his Preſence ſaved them; in his Love and his Pity he redeemed them; and he bare them and carried them all the Days of old.* And though God's pity diſturbs not his happineſs, he does not the leſs expreſs the ſenſe of our Miſeries, making us find *Grace for an Opportune relief*, *Heb.* 4. 16. or a *Seaſonable relief*, ſince it comes not always when we deſire it, but when it is moſt fit; for *it is not for you to know the times or the ſeaſons, which the Father hath put in his own Power*, *Acts* 1. 7. The *Caanitiſh* Woman muſt put up a refuſal, and the reproachful Name of a Dog, *Mat.* 7. 27. and the *Iſraelites* waited 430 Years before they were brought into the promiſed Land; languiſhing in that time, under heavy Burthens, *Gal.* 3. 13. and other Oppreſſions of the Politick *Ægyptians*, *Ezek.* 28. 24. St. *Paul* prayed thrice for the removal of that *Thorn to the Fleſh*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 7. And our Saviour would not be found till the third Day by his bleſſed Mother, though ſhe ſought him ſorrowing, *Luke* 2. 48. And *Lazarus* whom during his ſickneſs he ſtyled Friend, *John* 11. 2. in reſpect of whom the pious *Mary* ſays, *v.* 3. *him whom thou loveſt*, was not only ſuffered to lye a dying, but dyed; and was not relieved till it was thought impoſſible; and was ſo, except to Omnipotence; ſo that as no diſtreſs is out of his Power to relieve it,

it, ſo no extremity is inconſiſtent with his Compaſſion. He who inſpired the Prophets, is repreſented as a Refiner, *Mal.* 3. 3. and Refiners take not their Metal out of the fire, till it hath endured the flames, and ſtayed it's due time, and obtained it's full Purity and Splendour. And though in Afflictions, eſpecially National or Publick Calamities, God frequently makes no diſtinctions betwixt the Objects of his Compaſſion and thoſe of his Fury, involving them in the ſame Deſtiny; yet his Preſcience and Intentions make a great difference, though his Inflictions ſeem not to do ſo; as in the ſame fire we purge both the Gold and the mixed Lead or Antimony, but with this Intent, to conſume the more Ignoble Metals, or to blow them off into droſs or fumes, and to make the Gold purer and more full of Luſtre.

The Joys of Seraphick Love allayed by the deſires of Heaven.

It's true, the happineſs reſulting from the Prerogatives of *Seraphick Love* is allayed, by the deſires it creates of a more perfect Fruition of the Divine Object, which made the languiſhing Spouſe in the *Canticles*, cry out, *Cant.* 15. 5. *Stay me with Flaggons, comfort me with Apples, for I am ſick of Love*; and the Raviſhed Apoſtle, deſired to *return*, *Phil.* 1. 23. *and to be with Chriſt*, *Luke* 12. 36. And *David* ſays, As the *Heart panteth after the Water-Brooks, ſo panteth my Soul after thee O God. My Soul thirſteth for God, for the living God, when ſhall I come and appear before God!* But it was requiſite to raiſe our Thoughts towards Heaven, that there ſhould be peculiar Joys reſerved for us there, and it is a good ſign, when a *Seraphick Lovers* happineſs will be further compleated by a fuller Fruition of it. And even

even this State of Separation is ſweetened with as much allay as is conſiſtent with it's being a grief; a thirſt after Perfection being pronounced a Title to it. *Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be ſatisfied, Mat.* 5.6. and *let him that is a thirſt come, and whoſoever will let him take of the Water of Life freely. Rev.* 22. 17. and as the Joys of Heaven are as extenſive as our Hopes, each new aſſurance is a New degree of them, being acceptable to our hope, though uneaſy to our deſires. And theſe deſires of compleat felicity, ſhould not be more unwelcome for the preſent Diſquiet they may occaſion, no more than for the Zeal, they Argue, and the Happineſs they Promiſe; for this production of the Spirit, may be called as the Spirit is, an *earneſt*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 5. being not only Part of it, but a Pledge. And though *Seraphick Love* is thus allayed, yet the allay is ſupportable in compariſon of the Diſquiets and Torments, that attend ſenſual Love. Indeed I cannot ſay, that many have dyed for it, except as Reaſon may be ſaid to be the conſtituent Part of a Man, Love dethroning Reaſon; for tho' it leaves the Lover alive, the Man may be ſaid to be killed. But though Love deſtroys not Mens Lives it much diſquiets them. Lovers muſt be along while Servants, before they have the honour of being taken Notice of to be ſuch; and the Torments that Lovers feel are often called Martyrdoms, which perhaps is not without ſome Reaſon, if the Greatneſs of the Torment, without the Cauſe and Object, were ſufficient to make them Martyrs. And though Romances, repreſent Lovers ſo dexterouſly, that their Readers

ders admire and envy their Felicity, yet I have been ſo much concerned for ſome engaged in ſuch adventures, that Envy was ſoon turned into Pity; for though the Repulſes, Regrets, Jealouſies, Fears, Abſences, Deſpairs, and the other diſquieting Afflictions of Lovers are ſoon read, by the diverted Peruſer; yet they are not ſo eaſily ſupported by the Diſconſolate Lover; which though they may be handſomly expreſſed to divert the Reader, yet it is much happier to be free from Misfortunes, than to be able to talk eloquently of them. And though to read the Account of a Storm may be pleaſant, yet I find it not pleaſant to be in one. So the Deſcriptions of Love and Lovers, is different from the Experimental diſquieting Notions of it.

But ſuppoſe not *Lindamor*, that the only diſquiets of your Love proceeded from their not being acceptable to your Miſtreſs; for ſhould ſhe Crown them with Myrtle, and be as kind as *Hymen* could have made her, ſhe could only have diſabuſed, and not freed you from the want of Happineſs, but only of a miſtake concerning it; for moſt of theſe Tranſitory Goods are like the Senſative Plant, which we admire at a diſtance, but when touched it ſhrivels up it's leaves and contracts them, which gradually expand themſelves again when touched no longer. Thus the Objects of Love that charm us at a diſtance, whilſt gazed on with expectation and deſire, when once poſſeſſed, their former Luſtre vaniſhes, and they appear quite different things, though Abſence in a little time makes us forget their Emptineſs, and at a diſtance they are as apt to deceive us as ever; and indeed if we

compare the Senſative Plant to theſe temporal Goods, we muſt not except many Miſtreſſes; for tho' I am not ſo averſe to Matrimony as ſome think me, and would not refuſe to advice, though I ſhould be loath to be your Example; yet I have ſeen ſo few happy and ſo many unhappy Marriages, and have ſo ſeldom ſeen Men love their Wives, as they did their Miſtreſſes; that I wonder not that Law-makers, made Marriages undiſſoluble to make them laſting. For it's like a Lottery, he that ventures may loſe as well as win, and there are a great many Blanks to one Prize. And if the World is not miſtaken *Yours* and *Herminones* humours, are ſo unſuitable, that you might have poſſeſſed the Perſon, without the expected Happineſs; and might be as much diſappointed by her Grant as the denial of her Favours.

Ordinary Love a ſtep to Seraphick Love.

But not to purſue the Parallel betwixt *Seraphick* and ordinary *Love*, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew you, that your addictedneſs to the later may encourage you to purſue the former, and facilitate your Devotion, partly by breaking thoſe Chains that tyed your Affections to an unſatisfactory, and hindered you from aiming at a Sublimer Object; and partly by raiſing your Paſſion to a pitch fit for *Seraphick* Flames; for Love hath this Noble in it, that it frees us from ſelfiſhneſs, ſlights fortune, quiet, ſafety, honour, life, and all that concerns us, that ſtand in competition with the Loved Perſons Intereſt, and nothing is good or ill but as it comes through her; and Love having thus engaged you in Acts of ſelf-denial, it is but transferring your Love from a mean and miſtaken Object to a nobler Object; and

and your Love will be exalted into Devotion: Thus the Voice being improved by looſe Airs and wanton Songs may be further improved in Devout and Heavenly *Anthems*; And as in Hunting we follow but ſo trivial a game as a Hare, yet gain, vigor, ſufferance and agility, which fits us for the Hardſhips and toyl of Military Glory and Empire; ſo in Love, though the Courted Creature is fit to be numbered amongſt ſuch as made Love be painted blind; yet in the Practice and Conduct of that Paſſion, we gain ſuch reſigned Habits, as being prefered to ſerve Celeſtial Objects, may qualify us for Devotion; for indeed, Love is a kind of Devotion miſplaced and miſapplyed; for when you call your Miſtreſs Goddeſs, offer the Sacrifice of Hearts, Adoring, and Martyrdoms, does it not imply all is ſaid to a Divinity, which is ſo much the genuin Object of Mens Love, that that Paſſion cannot be exalted, without inveſting it with the Notions and Attributes of God. Thus *Aaron* and the revolting *Jews* Juſtifyed their adoring of the Idols they ſate up, by giving the Title of God to what they Worſhipped; thus acknowledging Adoration, due to the Deity.

Inconſtancy in Tranſitory Things ſhews the Preference of Celeſtial Objects.

And what we have ſaid is further proved by the fickleneſs of Lovers, which is commonly called Inconſtancy, which is but a Chaſe of perfect Beauty, which Love ſeeks in every Object, but can find it perfect in none; for Creatures have but Fragments of it, which cannot ſatisfie an Appetite born for God. Which is proved to be the true Object of our Love both by Mens fickleneſs to Women, and the Angels

Conſtancy to God. As the point of a Mariners Needle ſhews it's Inclination to the Pole both by it's wavering and reſt. The Diſſatisfaction in the fruition of Tranſitory Things, which Men call the Unhappineſs of their Nature, is rather the Priviledg of it, as it is the Prerogative of Men not to be pleaſed with Childrens Toys. And this may give us a taſte of the ſweetneſs of placing our Love on God, which the Soul is bleſſed with the reſigning of all other Satisfactions, for being ſo richly repayed by ſo indulgent a Father and Competent a Judg as God.

The Perfections of God the ſtrongeſt Motives to Love.

What we have hitherto ſaid to recommend *Seraphick Love*, rather reſpects the Love it ſelf than the Object of it. And ſince the nobleſt Motives to *Seraphick Love*, conſiſts in God's infinite Perfections and Prerogatives; and ſince the Properties of his Love are much more advantagious than thoſe of ours to him, the former moving him to kindle, cheriſh and crown the later, we ſhall proceed to conſider the higher Sort of Motives to Devotion, and ſhew, that the ſtrongeſt Inducements to raiſe our Affections peculiarly appear in God. What endeared *Hermione* to You, I ſuppoſe, was the Beauty and Excellences you thought were lodged in her, and your belief, that the Love ſhe ſhewed you, was great, free, conſtant and advantagious to you; and that theſe Properties illuſtriouſly concur in the Love of God, we ſhall endeavour to evince.

And

And *First*, the Excellency and Prerogative of Divine Nature, makes our Love due to God. Though in celebrating God's Perfections, I am ſenſible I ſhall rather detract from what I would praiſe, the Subject being ſo high, that Seraphims themſelves would come ſhort in doing it right. And if thoſe things never fell within the reach of our Senſes, nor entered into the Thoughts of Men which God hath reſerved for thoſe that Love him, 1 *Cor.* 2. 9. how incomprehenſible muſt thoſe things be, which he hath reſerved for himſelf, the Infinite Superiority of his Nature, making a vaſt difference betwixt what he hath thought fit to communicate, and his boundleſs incommunicable Perfections. *The Excellency of God's Nature a Motive to Seraphick Love.*

Wonder not therefore, if I look not long upon an Object too dazling for my Eyes, or uſe Hyperboles in the mention of Perfections, which make the higheſt but ſeeming ones, God's Nature as well as Words, being *exalted above all bleſſings and praiſe*, *Neh.* 9. 5. His Attributes conſpicuous in the Creation, ſhew his immenſe Power, unſearchable Wiſdom, and his exuberant Goodneſs, and may juſtly raiſe our Admiration and Amazement. And when with *Teleſcopes* I view the Stars in the upper Region of the World; and when with *Microſcopes* I diſcern the unimitable Curioſity of Natures Work-manſhip; & when by Anatomy and Chimiſtry, I ſtudy Natures Books, and conſult the Gloſſes of Learned Writers on thoſe Subjects, I am obliged to ſay with *David*, *how manifold are thy Works, O Lord! in Wiſdom haſt thou made them all*, *Pſal.* 104. 24. And when I have conſidered what I can

only understand enough to admire, I am obliged to interrupt my Enquiries and say, *Oh the Depths of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledg of God! how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his ways untraceable! Rom.* 11. 33. which may be said, if we consider any other of his Attributes.

But here *Lindamor*, we may consider, not to pursue further what we have elsewhere treated of, how much those that have Vertue enough in themselves to admire it in others, are in Love with *Cato*, *Scipio*, *&c.* who upon the account of their Vertues exceeded the rest of Mankind; though it is no Personal Advantage to us. How much then ought we to Love him who possesses Infinite Perfections? Were we our own Creators, what he hath done for others, might ravish and make us in love with him; and tho' his Benefits did not, his Essence would, give us Reason to love him for what he is; all Perfections flowing from him, and concentering in him. And not to mention his Sovereign Majesty (which is so high, that were it not his Commands, it would be Presumption in us to pretend to love him, and to expect Love from him) let us consider the proper attractive of Love, his Lovelinesse, which could we but see, all creature competitions would be as impossible, as they are unjust. In the fifth Evangelists prophetick Vision, *Esa.* 6. 7. the Seraphims are represented covering their Faces in the Presence of God; whence probably the jewish fashion of covering their Heads when they went to pray might take it's rise; though I have seen them sometimes only cover their Heads with those white

white Garments they wear at publick Devotions. And if *Moſes*'s Face, only by a few Days converſe with God, ſhone ſo as to dazle Mortal Eyes; and if the Angels, when ſent on meſſages here on Earth, were ſo Glorious tho' condeſcending to our Capacities, that Mortals were confounded at their Preſence; if I ſay in this Veil, they appeared ſo glorious, what may we conclude of God, of whom the Scripture ſays, *He that planted the Ear, ſhall he not hear? he that formed the Eye ſhall he not ſee? Pſal.* 94. 9. and ſhall not he that can communicate ſuch Excellences, ſhall he not poſſeſs them? the moſt perfect created Beauties, being but like ſhadows of his. Thoſe glimpſes of Beauty amongſt the Creatures, ſhould rather exalt our Conceptions, than detain our Paſſions. God never deſigned they ſhould terminate our Love, but exalt our Faith above them. Thus *Elijahs* fiery Chariots, though pure and bright, made of the nobleſt Materials, 2 *Kings* 2. 11. were only deſigned by God, to carry us up to him. And as the Patriarch's Steward was ſumptuouſly equipped to court *Rebecca*, not for himſelf, but *Iſaac*, *Gen.* 24. 10, — 53. ſo the Beauty that is lent to the Creature, is only to give us conceptions of God's Immenſity. To make a right uſe of Beauty, conſider God and them, your Miſtreſſes Picture and it's Chryſtal Cover, which though pure and lovely, was not the chiefeſt Object of your Eye, ſince you looked beyond it on that adored Image it veiled. Seraphick and Common Lovers look upon Beauty, as Aſtronomers and Children do upon Optick Glaſſes, one

admiring them for what they diſcover, the other for what they appear.

The Beauty of Creatures much inferior to that of God.

Indeed ſome of God's Creatures have Impreſſions both of his Lovelineſs and other Excellences, but they do but imperfectly reſemble him, enjoying only a precarious dependant and almoſt momentary Being, which ſeldom laſteth long; and therefore to prefer the dull repreſentations in Creatures, to the ſupreme Splendor that ſhines in God, is as abſurd as to adore a Parhelion, inſtead of the Sun. And if our dim Eyes, like the Prophets Servants, 2 *Kings* 6. 27. who ſaw Mountains near *Dothan* covered with Horſes and Chariots of Fire, could diſcern other inviſible Objects, we might ſee enough in God to cry out, *How great is his Goodneſs, and how great is his Beauty! Zach* 9. 17. The Angels who have the brighteſt Underſtandings, in ſo many thouſand Years, could ſee nothing in God nor out of him, to ſeduce their Affections. God's Lovelineſs, like rare Muſick, not only delights, but is valued by the moſt skilful Admirers. The Apoſtate Angels indeed fell, but not for any diſlike in God, but the affectation of Purity, and a ſacrilegious Ambition for Perfections, which they could not forbear wiſhing their own; which hath entailed a Curſe and Puniſhment. The *Ideas* I have of God's Perfections have inclined me to think, that God's telling *Moſes, thou canſt not ſee my Face, for there ſhall no Man ſee me and live, Exod.* 33. 20. was becauſe ſo glorious a ſight would create more joy and deſire than mortal frailty could ſuſtain; degrees of longing or joy having ſometimes raviſhed the Soul ſo much, that it hath broke the tyes that united

united it to the Body. And perhaps it may be a privilege in the other World, that we ſhall not only behold, but ſurvive ſo glorious a ſight, which is too bright for human Eyes; *till our Mortal ſhall have put on Immortality*, 1 *Cor.* 19.54.

But not to inſiſt upon a Subject, on which it is eaſie to ſay too much, tho' not enough; as thoſe do, who pretend to define God's Nature, which may more ſafely be defined, by acknowledging it impoſſible to be accurately defined; our Words being only Repreſentations of our Notions, and conſequently finite as our Beings, we are very likely to be miſtaken about what is Infinite. Nor will attention in this inform us much, ſince the more we contemplate God's Eſſence, the more it confounds us, as St. *Paul* ſays, he *could not ſee for the Glory of that Light*, *Acts* 22. 6, 11. which appeared from Heaven about him, at his Converſion. *Simonides* being asked what God was, asked a Days time to conſider of it, and after that deſired two days longer, and then demanded four days, and thus increaſed his demands of time to conſider of it, till at laſt being asked the Reaſon, he declared, that the longer he conſidered, the leſs he comprehended it. Thus the longer we gaze on the Meridian Sun, the leſs we ſee of it; and it is ſo difficult for us to explain God's Nature, that nothing but Infinite Underſtanding can be adequate to it; and even the Celebration of his Perfections ought not to be attempted without a deep ſenſe of our unworthineſs, the ſame Excellences that excite our Praiſes, tranſcending them. But here I ſhall imitate thoſe *Perſians*, who adored the Sun, though the Light it lent them

them only ſerved to make the riſe of them admired, and not to look into the Eſſence of it. Silence therefore is the propereſt way to expreſs our admiration of God's Perfections; admiration being never more ſeaſonable, than when God is the Object.

God's Love to us a Motive of our Love to him.

Hence it appearing, how fit an Object of our Love God is, for what he is in himſelf; we ſhall next ſhew, how far he deſerves our Love, from what he is to us; the vaſtneſs, freeneſs, diſintereſtedneſs and conſtancy, as well as advantageouſneſs of his Love to us, making all the Love we can pay him, but little of what we owe him.

And ſince the greatneſs of God's Love is a general Property diffuſed through the reſt, we ſhall proceed to the Freeneſs or Undeſervedneſs of it, which muſt be very great as well as undeſerved, ſince he loved us before we had a being, our Felicity thus preceding our Exiſtence, and our Creation being the Effect of his Love; which is ſufficient to engage ours to him. We think our ſelves obliged to love our Parents, though they are wicked and unkind, and but God's Inſtruments in producing us, we being born by Vertue of his Ordination. But God conferring on us, the Bleſſing promiſed to his antient People, whom he aſſured, that *he would love them freely*, *Hoſ.* 4. 14. he loved us both when we were not all, and when we were his Enemies. *If when we were Enemies we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son*, &c. *Rom.* 5. 10. Before we exiſted indeed, nothing could be a Motive to the Love of God; and when we were Enimies, *God commendeth*

mendeth his Love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners Chriſt dyed for us. Rom. 5. 8. when we had no other Motives for his Love, except the want of them. *Yet God ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, John* 3. 16. who alſo ſo loved us, that *he being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God; but made himſelf of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeneſs of Man. And being found in faſhion as a Man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs, Phil.* 6. 7, 8. he loving at no leſs rate than Death; ſuffering the extreameſt Indignities, debaſing himſelf to exalt us. *He was wounded for our Tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our Iniquities, the Chaſtiſement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed, Iſa.* 53. 5. *For ye know the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that though he was rich, yet for your ſakes he became poor, that ye through his Poverty might be made rich, 2 Cor.* 8. 9. Men having diſpleaſed God, and forfeited Happineſs, and though in a forlorn condition, were careleſs of the means of recovery, as well as incapable of contriving them. Yet then his Love contrived Expedients to reconcile his Juſtice and Mercy, and Sinners to himſelf; *viz.* by the Incarnation of his Son, which was ſo advantagious to us, and ſo wonderful, that the Angels deſire to *look into thoſe Divine Myſteries.* It is much diſputed, whether God could contrive to reconcile the expiation of Sin, without violating his Juſtice, any other way, than by the Paſſion and Death of Chriſt; but whether he could or not, he hath choſen the moſt obliging

obliging way, the manner of our Reſcue diſplaying the ſevereſt Juſtice, and the higheſt Mercy; the greateſt hatred of Sin, and the greateſt love to Sinners; delivering up for us that Son, who was ſo near to him, that he truly ſaid, *I and the Father are one*, *John* 10. 30. whom he gave as a Randſom for thoſe that were guilty of what he hated. And though our Saviour did this, to convince the Jews of his being the *Meſſiah*, yet he would not be invited from the Croſs, though the Prieſts and Scribes ſaid, *Let him now come down from the Croſs, and we will believe on him*, *Mat.* 23. 7. And Chriſt, to ſhew the World, how unable they were to recover themſelves out of the Abyſs, *the weight of Sin*, *Heb.* 12. 1. man had fallen into, till 4000 Years had made the World deſpair of any hopes of being retrieved, came not to their relief. Thus Chriſt healed a dumb Perſon, and diſpoſſeſſed him, *Mat.* 9. 32. who could only intreat by a diſability of making Interceſſion with Words; ſo that he might well ſay to the ſecure World, *I am found of them that ſought me not*, *Iſa.* 65. 1. and though our Saviour did a great many Miracles in the World, he ſcarce did any for his own relief. And to let us know, that by *his ſtripes* we might *be healed*, *Iſa.* 53. 5. we read, that he never rejoyced, but when his returned Diſciples told him, they had *chaſed Devils* and *Diſeaſes* out of *oppreſſed Mortals*, and that by his Authority, Men had been *diſpoſſeſſed*, *Luke* 10. He converſed with Vertues, and ſhewed what he was by Propheſies and Miracles, and often ſuſpended the Courſe of Nature, to let Man ſee, that he valued him above thoſe Creatures he

he Idolizes; and reverſed the Laws of the Univerſe, to bring us to the Obedience of God's, *Mat.* 12. 24. by numerous and great Miracles; yet a crooked Generation aſcribed thoſe wonders to the Devil, *Mat.* 3. 12. which Ingratitude was enough to make the Miracles he wrought the more wonderful, unmerited by ſuch blaſphemous Wretches, yet he ſuffered for them, and was *numbered with the Tranſgreſſors*, *Iſa.* 53. 12. as if he ſuffered deſervedly. And though he lived ſo much a Miracle, yet was he ſometimes ſo Deſpicable and Forlorn, that nothing but his Goodneſs ſhewed his Deity. And though our Saviour once ſaid, *greater love than this hath no Man, that a Man layeth down his Life for his Friends*, *John* 15. 13. by that Love we are not to underſtand Love indefinitely conſidered, but the ſingle Acts of a Mans Love to his Friends, conſidered amongſt themſelves; ſo that it was the higheſt expreſſion of real Love, to part with Life for their ſakes. And if it is ſo great a Token of Love to dye for a Friend, it muſt be a much greater to dye for thoſe that hated him; and to loſe his Blood for thoſe that ſpilt it. And that which makes his Love the greater is that he left Heaven and became capable of Sufferings, and Barbarous Indignities. And which adds to the Obligation, is, that he who ſuffered for us, tells us, that *he and his Father are one*, *John* 10. 30. and *John* 14. 9, 10, 11. And it was an evident Effect of God's Love, that *he gave his only begotten Son to redeem the World*, *John* 3. 16. and that *God commendeth his Love towards us, in that while we were ſinners, Chriſt dyed for us*, *Rom.* 5. 8. And Chriſt's Love was ſo free,

free, that the Condition of our Felicity is our Belief; and as Faith is only requiſite to our happineſs, the Condition increaſes the benefit, by affording us ſuch early Anticipations of it; for *Faith* being *the Subſtance of things hoped for; and evidence of things not ſeen*, *Heb.* 11. 1. it gives us Joys on this ſide the Grave, and bows Heaven down to us, till we can mount up to it, as the *Jewiſh* Spies brought their Country-Men into the Wilderneſs on this ſide *Jordan*, ſome of the delicious Fruit of the Land of Promiſe, *Numb.* 13. 23, 27.

But here I would have it obſerved, that tho' Faith be the grand Condition of God's Grant of Eternal Life; I would not aſcribe any thing to a Barren Lazy Faith, in oppoſition to that active one, called *Faith operating by Love*, *Gal.* 5. 6. ſince according to St. *James*, *Jam.* 2. 26. Faith and Works are as neceſſary to Devotion as a Union of Soul and Body is to Life. But though true Faith (which like *Rachel*) cries, *give me Children or elſe I dye*, *Gen.* 30. produces good Works; yet thoſe Works are not the Cauſe, but the Effect of Gods firſt Love to Men. *Thou art Good and does Good*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 119. 68. it being the Greatneſs of his Goodneſs that makes it ours; he not doing Good to us, becauſe we are, but becauſe he is Good himſelf; for as he is neceſſarily kind, he is not the leſs obligingly ſo to us; and though ſome kind of communicativeneſs be Eſſential to his Goodneſs, yet his Extention of it to us is Arbitrary. But further, as Men give moſt freely, where they have never given before, and make what they have given an Excuſe, for not giving again; yet

yet God gives where he hath given; thus the *Iſraelites* having broken the Contents, whilſt *Moſes* was bringing the Tables of the Law, and had provoked the Incenſed Giver to extirpate that rebellious People, God unwilling to remember his former Goodneſs, ſpeaking to *Moſes* calls them, *thy People whom thou broughteſt out of the Land of Ægypt*, *Exod.* 32. 7. upon which *Moſes*, to obtain a Pardon for them, put him in mind of his former Mercies, and calls them, *God's People, which he brought out of the Land of Ægypt, with great Power and with a Mighty Hand*, *ver.* 11. And the Fathers Mercy was ſo conſpicuous in his Son, that when *Lazarus*'s Siſter implored his Aſſiſtance, ſhe ſaid, *Lord, behold! He whom thou loveſt is Sick*, *John* 11. 3. And as the firſt Motives of Bounty are from himſelf, ſo his Favours put a value upon his ſucceeding Bleſſings, God's Liberality affording both Meaſures as well as Motives to himſelf.

The Diſintereſtedneſs of God's Motive to our Love.

Nor is the Love of God more free, than it is without Intereſt to him. His deſign is only to make us Inſtruments and Partakers of his Glory, and makes us happy; a way that both Elevates and Dignifys our Nature, his method of ſaving us, fitting *us for the Inheritance of Saints in Light*, *Col.* 1. 12. we being made *Partakers of the Divine Nature, having eſcaped the Corruption, that is in the World through Luſt*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. ſo that what Philoſophers placed their greateſt Felicity in, may ſerve to prepare Chriſtians for that higher ſtate of Bleſſedneſs, reſerved by God, for thoſe that Love him; it's value being heightened, by the Vertues and Graces given Men on Earth; for ſuch a Rational Happineſs

pineſs as is appropriated to them in Heaven. He can have no end in our Happineſs, whoſe Goodneſs and Happineſs are both Infinite; and who was unconceiveably happy, before we had a Being. He made not the World for the ſake of new acquiſitions; but his Goodneſs influenced him, to manifeſt and impart his Glory; for had the Deity been wanting, or could his Creatures have ſupplped him with any thing, he could have made the World ſooner; St. *Paul* 1 *Tim.* 1. 11. ſtyles God, *the bleſſed God*, which perhaps might be more properly rendered the *happy God*, and in the ſame Epiſtle, 1 *Tim.* 6. 15. he calls him, the *happy and only Potentate, God*, ſays the Apoſtle, *that made the World and all things therein, ſeeing that he is Lord of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not*, &c. *as though he needed any thing, ſeeing that he giveth to all, Life and Breath, and all things; and in him we live, and move, and have our being*, *Acts* 27. 24, 25, and 28. And indeed the Mind of Man, that conſiders and underſtands the import of his own Notions, finds the belief of God's Happineſs ſo coherent with that of his Being, that *Lucretius* in that impious paſſage, where he denies Divine Providence, under a pretence of eaſing God of it, the Government of the World, confeſſes, that the Divine Nature muſt needs enjoy an endleſs and ſupreme Tranquility, adding, that it is,

——— *Privata dolore omni, privata periclis;*
Ipſa ſuis pollens opibus, nihil indiga noſtri.

Whereby he acknowleges,

That

That from all griefs and dangers of them freed,
Rich in it ſelf, it has of us no need.

Or if in the plural Number, you would have him ſpeak of the God's, like a Heathen Poet,

Far above grief and danger, thoſe bleſt Powers,
Rich in their Native Goods, need none of Ours.

But a Nobler Poet tells us, that *The Earth is the Lords and the fulneſs thereof, the World, and they that dwell therein*, Pſalm 24. 1. And that *Great God that formed all things*, Prov. 26. 10. ſays, *If I were hungry I would not tell thee, for the World is mine, and the fulneſs thereof*, *Pſalm* 50. 12. His Ubiquity makes him impoſſible to be removed, and his Eſſence incapable of Excluſion; for he can be tranſported no where but where he is, ſince he is every where. He can ſee no Goods but what he gives, and his Plenty is ſo inexhauſtible, that his Liberality cannot diminiſh it. And though St. *James* calls God *the Father of Lights*, *James* 2. 17. *who beſtows every good and perfect Gift*, *James* 1. 13. yet *the Friend of God, as Abraham* is ſtyled, and that Royal Prieſt, (who was repreſented to be a Type of him, *Heb.* 7. and whom, *Heb.* 3. 1. he calls the *High Prieſt of our Profeſſion*,) both of them in the ſame Chapter ſtyle him, *Poſſeſſor of Heaven and Earth*, *Gen.* 14. 21, 22. ſo that God needs not ask of his Creatures, what he plentifully enjoys himſelf. The greateſt Service we can do him, is to ſerve our ſelves, in doing what we ought; for could we add any thing to him, he could not be Infinite. All we can

give him, are but like Pepper-Corns to a Landlord, Acknowledgments that we hold all we have under him. When we ſee the Sun, it makes it no greater, only makes it ours, and if we ſhut our Eyes, that glorious Planet ſuffers no Eclipſe, nor does it loſe it's Light, but we. *If thou ſinneſt* (ſays *Elihu* in *Job*) *what does thou againſt him? if thou be Righteous, what giveſt thou him? or what receiveth he of thy hands? thy Wickedneſs may hurt a Man as thou art, and thy Righteouſneſs may profit the Son of Man*, *Job.* 35. 6, 7, 8. God enjoys a Felicity, as well as *Light*, *inacceſſable* to all inferior Attempts, 1 *Tim.* 6. 16. and his Tranquility is above all diſquieting Impreſſions. He feels not the Torments he inflicts, nor is his Juſtice leſs Eſſential than his Mercy; Thouſands falling Sacrifices to his ſeverer Attributes, for one that deſerves the more favourable. He ſaid, *He would get himſelf Honour upon Pharoah and all his Hoſt*, when their ruin was deſigned in the *Red Sea*, *Exod.* 14. 17, 18. and ſays *Moſes*, *he hath triumphed gloriouſly*, when it was done, *Exod.* 15. 1. And further, *Behold I am againſt thee O Sidon, and I will be glorifyed in the midſt of thee, and they ſhall know that I am the Lord, when I ſhall have executed my Judgments in her*, *Ezek.* 28. 22. Thus when ſtrange Fire blaſted the two Sons of *Aaron*, God is ſaid *to have been ſanctifyed in them that come nigh him, and to have been glorifyed before all the People*, *Levit.* 10. 3. God Almighty is ſo ſtrict and ſevere in his Laws, that he will not ſuffer the Miniſters of his Altars to go unpuniſhed, but will find them a *conſuming fire*, *Heb.* 12. 29. who will be glorifyed either by the Obedience

or

or Deſtruction of thoſe that approach him. And to ſhew, that provoked Juſtice as well as Mercy, may afford him ſatisfaction, we ſhall recite, what the ſacred Orator hath ſaid, *And it ſhall come to paſs, that as the Lord rejoyced over you to do you good, and multiply you, ſo will the Lord rejoyce over you, to deſtroy you and bring you to nought, Deut.* 18. 16. ſo that though *Jeremiah* ſaid truly, *that he does not afflict wilfully, nor grieve the Children of Men, Lam.* 3. 33. (and therefore the Conſumption of the whole Land, which we Engliſh *God's Work, his ſtrange Work, Iſa.* 28. 21. is by others read *opus alienum ſuum,*) yet when Sins grow ſo provoking, that his Mercy can no longer intercede with his Juſtice, then his ſatisfaction in deſtroying thoſe that would not be preſerved, appears from thoſe Expreſſions in *Ezekiel*, having foretold, how the *Iſraelites* ſhould be deſtroyed by Sword, Peſtilence and Famin, he adds, *Thus ſhall my Anger be accompliſhed, and I will cauſe my Fury to reſt upon them, and I will be Comforted, Ezek.* 13. 5 ſo that the Howlings of the damned, as well as the Hallelujahs of the bleſſed, ſounding his Praiſes, as ſhadows well placed, praiſe the Painter, as well as brighter Colours. And as Sulphureous Exhalations fly up towards the Sky, yet cannot reach Heaven, nor diſcompoſe the Spheres, but whatever Storms or Thunder they produce, do all the miſchief to the Globe they roſe from, ſo the wicked may wrong God, yet their Sins only harm themſelves, and only trouble him, becauſe they oblige him to puniſh them; for thoſe ſins that moſt provoke God, do him no harm. An Impious Man may hurt another

like himſelf, but not a Supreme Infinite Deity, whoſe infinite Perfections makes his Happineſs as inſeparable as his Eſſence. And though our Offences may diminiſh his acceſſional Glory, yet they cannot his eſſential Felicity; their ſins can but change the Attributes they ſhould honour, and contribute leſs to the glorifying his Goodneſs, by glorifying his Juſtice; for he will be glorifyed, either by their Duties, or by puniſhing them for their Sins. So that God is but little obliged to us for declining Hell; nor will it much increaſe the ſcore, though you make addreſſes to gain Heaven. *Can a Man* ſays *Eliphaz, be profitable unto God, as he that is wiſe may be profitable unto himſelf, is it any Pleaſure to the Almighty that thou art Righteous? or is it Gain unto him, that thou makeſt thy ways Perfect? Job* 22. 2, 3. and the *Pſalmiſt* ſays, *my Goodneſs extendeth not unto thee, Pſal.* 16. 2. Fire upon the Altars may warm us, but not Heaven, nor will their Light be wanted in the Sun's Reſidence. The Fumes reach not Heaven, but either vaniſh in the Sky, or cloud and obſcure it. Our beſt Performances, being like the Wax an Heir brings to his Father, which is only to ſettle a Fortune upon himſelf. And though God may be pleaſed with our good Performances, it is only as they afford him opportunity of rewarding them; and our acknowleging of former Favours, only give him occaſion of beſtowing more upon us; as *Iſaac* deſired his Sons Veniſon, that he might have an opportunity of Bleſſing him, *Gen.* 6. 4.

And

And to ſhew further, how little God's Favours are, or can be intereſted, we may conſider, that it lies not in our Power to requite them, ſince we can give him nothing but his own; both our Will and Power to ſerve him being his; and all the Duties we can pay, are more reſtitutions than requitals. *David* and his People made large Contributions towards building the Temple, with this ſolemn Confeſſion, which perhaps was more acceptable to God, than all the reſt, *Thine, O Lord, is the Greatneſs, and the Power, and the Glory, and the Victory, and the Majeſty; for all that is in Heaven and in Earth is thine. Thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both Riches and Honour come of thee, and thou reigneſt over all. And in thy Hand is Power and Might, and in thy Hand it is to make Great, and to give Strength unto all. Now therefore our God, we thank thee, and praiſe thy Glorious Name. But who am I? and what is my People? that we ſhould be able to offer ſo willingly after this ſort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are Strangers before thee, and Sojourners, as were all our Fathers. Our Days on Earth, are as a ſhadow, and there is none abiding. O Lord our God, all this ſtore that we have prepared to build thee a Houſe, for thy holy Name, cometh of thine Hand, and is all thy own,* 1 Chron. 29. and the Apoſtle asks, *who hath firſt given to him, and it ſhall be recompenced to him again? for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things,* Rom. 11. 35, 36. Nay our Love alone is unable to pay the Debt, being too much God's own, to be the recompence. And the Divine

God's Love not to be requited by us, the greater motive to love him.

Lover might well ſay, that *herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us,* 1 *John* 4. 10. and the ſame Apoſtle ſays, *we love him because he loved us firſt,* 1 *John* 4. 19. And if we compare God's Mercies with Mens Ingratitude, and reflect upon the ſmall returns we make him, or his, we muſt acknowledg that the loving God for his Favours is one of the greateſt that we love him for. Nay our Love is ſo incapable of requiting him, that our wiſhes cannot extend to it; for he enjoys ſo much Felicity, that our wiſhes can reach nothing worthy of him, except they comprize what he already enjoys. This inability of ours, is not the leaſt uneaſy property in *Seraphick Love,* ſince it cannot but grieve us, to ſee our ſelves only paſſive in our Love. We would fain contribute ſomething, ſo that ſome pious Perſons have been ſo tranſported with Gratitude and Devotion, as to uſe Expreſſions more affectionate than reaſonable, and which argued more God's Merits, than his want of them. But we need not wiſh God Almighty happy, ſince he already enjoys more than we can conceive; and it muſt needs be the greateſt Happineſs to be bleſſed above all Increaſe, and greater than the higheſt degree that we can wiſh.

The Conſtancy of God's Love a Motive to ours.

But to conſider, the Conſtancy of God's Love; we cannot think of any thing more unworthy, or injurious of God, than to think him inconſtant. His Love is immutably Eternal, both proceeding the beginning of Time, and will remain after it's utmoſt Period, *Having loved his own which were in the World, he loved them unto the End,* *John* 13. 1. and St. *James* tells us, that

every

every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, he adds, *with whom is no Variableneſs, neither ſhadow of Turning. Of his own Will begot he us, of the Word of Truth*, *James* 1. 17. And indeed, ſince the Inducements of his Love, come from himſelf and not us, the Immutability of his Nature implys it laſting, for *I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye Sons of Jacob are not conſumed*, *Mal.* 3. 6. ſays God by the Prophet, and in *Jeremiah* he ſays to his People, *I have loved thee with an Everlaſting Love.* And to *Joſhua* he ſay'd, *I will never leave thee nor forſake thee*, *Joſh.* 1. 5. which in *Heb.* 13. 5. is applyed to Believers in general, for *the gifts and calling of God are without Repentance*, *Rom.* 11. 29. Nor does the Effects of his Anger deſtroy his Love, that Anger proceeding from his Love, being unwilling to ſee a fault or blemiſh in the Face he loves. Some ſtrike our Cloaks not out of Anger, but to drive the duſt out of them: *As many as I Love I rebuke and chaſten*, *Rev.* 3. 19. ſays our Saviour, and *I know O Lord, that thy Judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulneſs haſt afflicted me*, *Pſal.* 129. 75. Afflictions being ſent to refine us from our Droſs, and to prepare us for his own Impreſſions. The great *Artificer* of his Church, *Heb.* 11. 10. uſes not the Hammer and Chizel to hurt us, but to faſhion us, that we may ſtrengthen his Heavenly Structure. But God is not only conſtant in his Love, but in his Lovelineſs; and as Female Beautys are as fickle in their Faces as their Minds, Caſualties or Age making a certain change, ſo their Inconſtancy leaves their Kindneſſes as well as Beauty uncer-

tain, both which are requiſite to compleat the Lovers Happineſs; for ſometimes when a Miſtreſſes Humour does not alter ſo much as to be guilty of Inconſtancy, her Beauty alters ſo much, that her Lover could wiſh her ſo, that he might have an excuſe for imitation or revenge. But in Devotion, we are free from theſe fears, God ſtill bleſſing us with his Love, and always deſerving the utmoſt of ours. And as he is always conſtant in his Love to us, ſo he endeavours to incline us to be ſo to him. The want of ſuch a Diſpoſition occaſioned *Adams* fall, and loſt the fallen Angels Heaven; ſuch a Diſpoſition in our Affections being requiſite to ſecure our Love; as there is in the Centre of the Earth, which Philoſophers ſay, not only attracts heavy Bodies, but keeps them there. For we are ſo unapt to ſecure, and ſo ready to forſake our own Felicity, that it's Excellency will not ſufficiently engage our addreſſes, nor it's Poſſeſſion ſufficient to prevent revolts; for, like Children, we want not only to have what we ought to have, offered, but forced upon us; and muſt be confined to the moſt ſtately buildings to keep them out of the dirt. But Divine Conſtancy hath theſe three Properties of the Loadſtone; *Firſt*, it never looſes it's Inclination for the Steel; *Secondly*, when united, it ſtill retains it's attractive Qualities; *Thirdly*, it never touches the inclining Steel, but it leaves Impreſſions, which diſpoſe it to return to it's Magnetick Poſture, fitteſt to receive new Impreſſions, to which we ſhall add, that the Load-Stone receives no advantage from the Union of the Steel, but communicates it's Virtue

to

to the Steel. Nay further, Abſence and Rivals which ruin other Lovers Happineſs, can have no ſuch Effect in *Seraphick Love*; for God's Ubiquity makes him always preſent with us; ſo that we need not wiſh for a few Minutes Converſe, ſince we may have it always; beſides no Viſits can be unſeaſonable, nor too long and tedious. The Antient Propheteſs, for many Years, *departed not from the Temple; but ſerved God with Faſtings and Prayers, Night and Day*, *Luk.* 2. 37. &c. Nor were the *Mid-night Hymns*. *Acts* 6.25, 26. of *Paul* and *Silas*, troubleſom; for an Angel was ſent with the news of their Liberty. And when *Enoch* had *walked with God* many Years, *Gen.* 5. 22, 23, 24. God was ſo far from being tired with it, that he exempted him from Death, and conveyed him to Heaven, to a cloſer Communion. And though *Moſes* converſed with God, *Forty days and Forty nights*, *Exod.* 34. 30. God was ſo far from being diſpleaſed, that he gave him ſuch a Signal Token of his Favour, that his dazled Country-Men were not able to behold him. Again a great many Lovers are proud of their Sufferings, if the Miſtreſs does but know that they are tormented; But in *Seraphick Love* all our Diſquiets are known by him, who puts our *Tears into his Bottle*, *Pſal.* 56. 8. and recompences the greateſt Misfortunes his Love occaſions with ſuch Joys, as makes them loſe that Name. So that each pious Soul may ſay, *Thou knoweſt my down ſitting, and my upriſing, thou underſtandeth my Thoughts a far off, thou compaſſes my Path, and my lying down and art acquainted with all my Ways*, *Pſal.* 139. 2, 3. And Chriſt ſo much regards ſuch

ſuch pious Perſons, that he is repreſented in the *Apocalypſe*, telling the Ruler of the Church of *Smyrna*, *I know thy Works and Tribulation and Power*, *Rev.* 2. 8, 9. and to an Angel of the Church of *Pergamus*, *I know thy Works, and where thou dwelleſt, even where Satans Seat, and thou holdeſt faſt my Name, and haſt not denied my Faith, even in thoſe days wherein* Antipas *was my Faithful Martyr, who was ſlain amongſt you, where Satan dwelleth.* So that no Circumſtance of our Love eſcapes his Notice, and though we forget them he does not. *When ſaw we thee any way diſtreſſed and relieved thee?* will be asked of thoſe for whom Heaven is allotted. Thoſe who in depraved times, as *Lot* did in *Sodom*, mourned for the Sins of others, and condoled the Wickedneſs of the Age; though fear might oblige them to conceal their concern, yet *the Lord harkened, and heard it, and a Book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name. Then ſhall he return, and diſcern between the Righteous and the Wicked, between him that ſerveth God, and him that ſerveth him not.* Mal. 3. 16, 17. *I know*, ſays Chriſt, *thy Works and Tribulation and Poverty: Fear none of theſe things that thou ſhall ſuffer. Be thou Faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life*, *Rev.* 2. 9, 10. God often accepts good Intentions inſtead of Actions, and though *David* built not the Temple, God ſaid to his Son: *For as much as it was in thine heart to build a Houſe for my Name, thou didſt well in that it was in thine Heart*, 2 *Chron.* 6. 8. and our Saviour calls God, *Your Father which ſeeth in ſecret*, &c. *Mat.* 6.

6. 6. Nor is there any Danger of Rivals ſupplanting us; ſince in Devotion, their Prayers are, that God would encreaſe his Love, and make freſh Additions, as well as grateful Diſpoſitions to return it. Our Saviour tells us, *there is Joy in the Preſence of the Angels of God over one Sinner that repenteth*, *Luke* 15. 7, 10. And the ſole Hymn of the Celeſtial Quire, *Luk.* 2. 13, 14. was for a Bleſſing to Mankind. *For unto us the Child is born, and unto us the Son is given*, Iſa. 9.6. *who took not upon him the Nature of Angels but the Seed of Abraham*, *Heb.* 2.16. Divine Love makes us ſo Noble and diſintereſted, that we Love nothing more, except the object of our Love, than thoſe that concur in that Love.

Predeſtination conſidered, as it relates to God's Goodneſs.

And here we ſhall obſerve, that ſeveral Paſſages of this Diſcourſe, ſuppoſe the Truth of their Doctrin, who aſcribe to God, an Eternal Inconditionate Decree of Election, or Reprobation. Yet we ſhall not here tell you, what we think of Predeſtination ſo much diſputed. Thoſe that are truly pious, whether *Calviniſts* or *Remonſtrants* are perhaps more eſteemed by God Almighty, than one another, the one thinking to magnify his Goodneſs, and the other contending to ſecure the Credit of his Juſtice. Yet in Honouring his Goodneſs, both Parties ſeem Rivals, the one thinking it moſt celebrated, by allowing it irreſiſtible, to whom happineſs was deſigned; and the other thinking it Univerſal, and that every Body may be happy if he pleaſes; the one aſſigning free Grace and unlimited Extent, and the other aſcribing it an Infallible Victorious Degree. But not to enter upon theſe Controverſies, the Doctrin of Predeſtination

tion is grounded upon, is rejected by moſt, nor is it neceſſary to Juſtify the Greatneſs of God's Love; for it is ſo evident, that God is the Author of Man's Felicity, that the diſpute is not ſo much about the thing as the manner of it's being profered, the *Calviniſts* maintaining Grace irreſiſtibly offered, and the others, granting it not only free and undeſerved, but that the offer enables thoſe it is preſented to, to accept it; ſo that Man needs contribute nothing to his Felicity, but the Acceptance of it, and thus properly may be ſaid to owe it to God, tho' as the Beggar he holds his Hand to receive his Alms. Chriſt payed *a Ranſom to redeem us*, and is called *the Lord that bought us*, but as God provided that Ranſom, it was the Effect, not of his Juſtice, but his Love. *He ſent his only begotten Son to redeem it*, *John* 3. 16. and St. *Paul* tells us, *we are juſtifyed freely by his Grace*, Rom. 3. 24. *through the Redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt*; for our Merit can deſerve nothing as a Due, except as his Promiſe hath made it ſo, and we owe to his Mercy, the right we have to his Juſtice. Tho' St. *Paul* having *fought the good fight finiſhed his Courſe and kept the Faith*, 2 Tim. 4. *verſ.* 7, 8. and *expected a Crown of Righteouſneſs from the Lord*, as the Righteous Judg, yet he tells us, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. *by Grace we are ſaved through Faith, and that not of our ſelves, it is the gift of God, but the making us theſe great and pretious promiſes, is the Effect of his free and undeſerved goodneſs*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. ſince as we are his Creatures, he might expect what Service he pleaſed without the recompence of Eternal Glory; ſince we muſt acknowledg our ſelves *unprofitable Servants, who have*

have done but what was our Duty to do, Luke 17. 10. and what if we had omitted, we had been liable to punishment for, and indeed it is the Opinion of some, that Men are more obliged to God's Goodness than the Angels, since as they have free Will, they partly cooperate their own Felicity.

The Advantagiousness of God's Love to us.

But to proceed to the last Property, which renders God the chiefest Object of our Love, *viz.* the Advantagiousness of his Love to Us, in respect of this and a future State. In this World, we owe to God all the Goods we enjoy, and our Selves too, *for it is he that hath made us, and not we our selves, Psal.* 110. ver. 3. And we were not only as *Clay in the Potters Hands, Isa.* 24. 8. so that he might have made us any thing, but he made us out of nothing. His Love was the Original Blessing from whence all the rest flow, and though several things we enjoy, seem to be acquired by our own Qualifications, as Wit, Industry, *&c.* yet since he gave us those Qualifications, the Effects may be esteemed his Goods. But besides the more obvious Presents of God's Bounty, there are other Effects of his Goodness, which Custom makes less conspicuous, yet they are more valued, when the want of them makes their value better understood. Were we to consider, the different Miseries, that several People undergo either in Slavery, Sickness or other Misfortunes, we may have Reason to think, that God's Privative Favours are no less than his Positive ones, and that we are as much obliged to God for what we are not, as for what we are, his discriminating Mercy exempting us from Miseries, as great as the Blessings it confers

confers on us; for *who makes thee to differ*, 2 *Cor.* 4. 7. may be asked in reſpect of our External as well as Spiritual Condition. And ſome are more obliged to God, for protecting them from thoſe Vices that disfigure Men's Minds, than ſome leſs dangerous Diſtempers of the Body.

Ambition, Luſt, Avarice, Revenge and Vain Converſation, are more Dangerous and Formidable, than Diſeaſes, that oblige Men to take Phyſick or force them into Hoſpitals: and God often inflicts with Diſtempers of the Body to cure thoſe of the Mind. The *Iſraelites* had a Caution given them, leſt Proſperity ſhould make any of them ſay in his Heart. *My Power and the Might of my Hand hath gotten me this Wealth. But they ſhall remember the Lord their God; for it is he that giveth them Power to get Wealth*, *Deut.* 8. 17, 18. But it was not the *Iſraelites* only that were inſenſible of God's Bounty ſo to them; for by the Prophet he complained, *I thought* Ephraim *to go taking them by the Arms, but they knew not that I healed them. Hoſ.* 11. 3. and there are too many of whom he might ſay, *for ſhe did not know that I gave her Corn and Wine, and Oyl, and multiplyed her Silver, and her Gold, which they prepared for* Baal. *Therefore will I return and take away my Corn in the time thereof, and my Wine in the Seaſon thereof, and will recover my Wool, and my Flax given to cover her Nakedneſs, Hoſ.* 1. 8, 9. And as for Spiritual Goods, God gives us ſuch earneſt of Spiritual Joys, that, that Earneſt is ſufficient to comfort us; and tranſcends all thoſe Momentary Pleaſures it obliges us to forſake, to ſecure Eternal Ones. But to enumerate God's Mercies in this Life would be too tedious. But

God's

God's Love dyes not with us, but moſt appears after Death; not leaving us in the Grave, but like the Angels, which *carried Lazarus's Soul to Abrahams Boſom*, Luke 16. 22. giving each bleſſed Saint Cauſe to ſay of God, as *Naomi* did of *Boaz*, that *he hath not left his kindneſs to the living and to the dead*, *Ruth* 2. 20. and *Now are we the Sons of God* (ſays St. *John*) *and it does not yet appear what we ſhall be, but we know, when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him*, 1 John. 3. 1. which ſhall be the Subject of the enſuing Diſcourſe.

The Hopes of Future Happineſs a Motive to the Love of God.

But before we proceed to conſider the Greatneſs of the Felicity reſerved for us in Heaven, it may be requiſite to obſerve, that ſome think, it is a Mercenary and Unfilial Affection to hope for Heaven. Indeed to expect it as Wages, or by way of Merit, would be Preſumption; but to number God's Bleſſings amongſt the Motives of loving God, is but to imitate holy *David*, who ſays, *I love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard my Voice and my Supplication*, *Pſal.* 16. 1. And to comfort our ſelves with the joys of Heaven in the way to it, is to imitate *Moſes*, of whom it is ſaid, *He eſteemed the reproach of Chriſt greater Riches than the Treaſures in Egypt; for he had reſpect unto the recompence of the Reward*, *Heb.* 11. 26. It is indeed a happineſs, to love God without the conſideration of future advantage, yet it is not required as a Duty. Indeed were the Rewards to be expected in this Life, the expectation might be looked upon as Mercenary, but to forego the Pleaſures of this World, and to undergo Hardſhips and Dangers to attain the Joys of Heaven, is a kind of Mercenarineſs, that

that none but a pious Perſon will be guilty of. Indeed the Fear of Hell may be one Motive to good Actions, ſince the Scripture advices us, *Let us therefore fear, leſt a Promiſe being left us of entring into his Reſt, any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it*, Heb. 4. 1. and St. *Paul* tells us, *I keep under my Body, and bring it into ſubjection, leſt by any means, when I have preached to others, I my ſelf ſhould be a caſt away*; 1 Cor. 9. 27. and Chriſt himſelf gives this admonition, *I ſay unto my Friends, be not afraid of them that kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do: But I will forewarn you whom you ſhall fear; fear him which after he hath killed, hath power to caſt into Hell, I ſay unto you, fear him*; Luke 12. 4, 5. where we are not only told, who we are to fear, but are told the Reaſon why we ought to do ſo as St. *Paul* ſays, *I know whom I have entruſted how Faithful & how Omnipotent*, 1 Pet. 4. 19. whence he adds, *and I am perſwaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, againſt that Day*, 2 Tim. 1. 12. To which we ſhall add the following, *I preſs towards the Mark for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus*, Phil. 3. 14. *Bleſſed are they that do his Commandment, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the Gates into the City*, Rev. 22. 14. *Laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good Foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold of Eternal Life*, 1 Tim. 6. 19. *To them, who by patient continuance in well doing, ſeek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, Eternal Life*, Rom. 2. 17. And it was ſaid of Chriſt, whoſe Love no doubt was filial, *looking unto Jeſus the Author and Finiſher of our Faith, who for the Joy*

that

that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs, deſpiſed the ſhame, and is ſet down at the right hand of the Throne of God, Heb. 12. 22. Nor does it appear unfilial for a Child of God to raiſe thoſe Paſſions, which his Father deſigned to promote in him, upon the ſame Motives God made uſe of to excite them. The Scripture plainly invites our hopes, *Every Man,* ſays St. *Paul, that ſtriveth for the Maſtery is Temperate in all things; now they do it to obtain a Corruptible Crown, but we an Incorruptible.* 1 Cor. 9. 25. And our Saviour is repreſented in one place, ſaying, *rejoyce and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven,* Mat. 5. 12. and again, *Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life,* Rev. 2. 10. Since then the Scripture thus allures our Hopes, it cannot be ſinful to cheriſh the Paſſions naturally belonging to thoſe Objects. And as God, who knows us better than we do our ſelves, makes uſe of Hopes and Fears to engage us in his Service, we ought not to find fault with his Methods, or reject any help to promote Piety, which finds ſo many things apt to reſiſt it. And ſince notwithſtanding hopes, many Mens Devotion is very Languid, without them, it may juſtly be feared, there would be none at all.

The Advantage of God's Love in reſpect of a future State.

But to proceed to ſhew the advantageouſneſs of God's Love; as it here gives us a Right, and may hereafter gain us Admiſſion to Heaven. Heaven is the Seat of ſo much Happineſs, that in the midſt of our Joys we ſhall ſcarce think Heaven the ſeat of them: The Poſſeſſion of thoſe Goods as much exceeding our Expectations, as the empty ones here diſappoint them; *for the*

Eye hath not ſeen, nor the Ear heard, neither have entred into the Heart of Man, the things which God hath Prepared for them that Love him. 1 Cor. 2. 9. ſuch pure delights tranſcending the Sublimeſt Imaginations; for the moſt perfect and abſtract *Ideas* we can form of Happineſs, will be found imperfect when we come to Heaven, which is a place ſo full of Joy, that our Diſappointment will be our Happineſs, we partaking ſo much of his Immenſity, that the Apoſtle only gives it a Negative Deſcription. In Heaven our Faculties will be gratifyed with ſuitable Objects, and our Capacities of Happineſs both increaſed and filled; and as a Child before it is born cannot have *Ideas* of thoſe pleaſant Objects, which he may be afterwards entertained with, and as a Child in his Nonage hath not the ſame Knowledg of Things, as when his Intellectuals are ripened; ſo when we come to Heaven, we ſhall be preſented with a new and peculiar Set of Objects, which we could have no *Ideas* of before our Admiſſion there; and as thoſe Objects were unknown to us before, ſuch will afford us both new and greater ſatisfaction and delights; for the Joys of Heaven are like it's Stars, which though their remoteneſs makes them ſeem little; yet in reality, they are very large, ſo that the leaſt of them is much bigger than the whole Earth it ſelf; which if you ſhould behold through a good Teleſcope, they would appear much bigger, and their remoteneſs would much leſs detract from their true Magnitude. And thus the remoteneſs of the Joys of Heaven makes them appear much leſs than they really are.

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In Heaven then we ſhall find Happineſs enough to enable us to give a better definition of them. We ſhall then know how to eſtimate thoſe Goods which concur to the felicity we enjoy, made up of a Confluence of Perfections, and a Perpetuity of Felicities. Heaven will afford us Happineſs, not by confining, but by giving us a full fruition of our deſires, which cannot fail of Choice of Objects; which will be both juſt and infallibly accompliſhed. We ſhall there reſemble, what we now admire, *the Spirits of Juſt Men made Perfect*, Heb. 12. 23. who will be our conſtant and familiar Companions, where we ſhall converſe with thoſe glorious Spirits, whoſe Nature is ſo full of Luſtre, that when they appear to us here, all their diſguiſes cannot ſo much darken their appearance, but that they appear full of wonder and admiration. There we ſhall ſee our Bleſſed Saviour, who hath done and ſuffered ſo much for us, and who when he vouchſafed *to pitch his Tent amongſt us*, John 1. 14. and by his Merits and Example endeavoured to fit us for Heaven, mixed an awful Majeſty with a humble Meekneſs, and the Infirmities of Human Nature, with the brightneſs of his Divinity; And in his whole Life, ſhewed ſuch perfect and exemplary Vertue, with ſo much reſpect towards them that purſued it, that the *Jews* could not deny, but that *He had done all things well*, Mat. 7. 37. and even his Enemies, confeſſed, that *never Man ſpake like him*, John 7. 46. And the Apoſtles, whoſe Education made them ſubject to frequent reproofs for their Failings, as well as Hardſhips in his Service, ſaid, *Let us alſo go that we may dye with him*, John 11. 16.

The Joys of Heaven only to be Judged of by the Poſſeſſion of them.

16. But in Heaven we ſhall ſee him not in *the form of a Servant*, Phil. 2. 7. which he put on to do his Office here, of Prieſt and Prophet, but in his Regal State, as he is *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, Rev. 19. 16. Having all Power, both in Heaven and Earth. And how nobly will he be attended in Heaven, who when in *the Wilderneſs amongſt the Wild Beaſts, the Angel Miniſtred to him*, Mar. 1. 13. and whilſt he lay in a Manger, *Luk.* 1. the Celeſtial Hoſt Solemnized his Birth, according to that Paſſage in the *Hebrews. When he bringeth in the firſt begotten into the World* (he ſaith) *and let all the Angels of God Worſhip him.* Heb. 1. 6. one of which was able to deſtroy in one Night above 180000, Men in *Senacherib's* Camp; 2 *King.* 19. 35. And their Nature is ſo much Superior to the moſt excellent of Mortals, that when *Joſhuah* had challenged one that appeared in the likeneſs of a Man, and demanded whom he was for, when he knew he was an Angel, he altered his Words into a ſubmiſſive addreſs, *What ſaith my Lord unto his Servant*, John 5. 13. 14. as if he had ſuppoſed him to be the *Angel of the Covenant*, Mal. 3. 1. as the Original hath it, and as it is in the ſame Text, *Lord.* And *David*, who was ſecond in Power upon Earth, and firſt in Wiſdom and Underſtanding confeſſes to the Angel, that he was confounded at his Preſence, and adds, *How can the Servant of this my Lord, talk with this my Lord*, Dan. 10. 17. We ſhall not then behold our Saviour diſguiſed with his ſufferings, but in the Triumphant State, they are now rewarded with. The Thorns of his Crown will appear more Glorious, than the flaming Buſh he appeared to *Moſes* in, *Exod.* 3. 2.

nor

nor ſhall we ſee him in the form, which made the Prophet ſay, *He hath now no form nor comlineſs, and when we ſhall ſee him, there is no Beauty that we ſhould deſire*, Iſa. 53. 2. But he will appear with ſo much Splendor and Beauty, that he may be well eſteemed *Nephle, the Admirable*, Iſa. 9. 6. And our raviſhed Souls, by a more immediate Contemplation, will find him not unlike the Spouſe in *Solomon's* myſtick *Epithalmium*, who having dwelt upon the accompliſhed Parts of the Divine Bride-groom, exclaims, *He is altogether Deſires*, Cant. 5. 10. or *moſt deſirous*, or *He is altogether lovely*, His Eyes will appear like Active Fire, *Rev.* 1. 14. and will influence the Breaſts of the Beholders with Flames as pure and holy, as the Fathers of the Church might conceive the *Seraphims* to conſiſt of, ſince it *never entered into the Heart of Man, what God hath reſerved in Heaven for thoſe that Love him.* The Epithite of inconceiveable can but imperfectly repreſent the Glory, which is to be the reward, the Sufferings and Obedience of that only begotten Son for whoſe ſake Thouſands are Crowned with Glory unimaginable. He who vouchſafed his Servants a Brightneſs equal to that of the Stars, *Dan.* 12. 3. will communicate a more radiant Luſtre to that *Son of Righteouſneſs*, Mal. 4. 2. that only Son, whom *he hath made Heir of all things, by whom alſo he made the Worlds; who being the brightneſs of his Glory, and the Expreſs Image of his Perſon, and upholding all things by the Word of his Power, when he had by himſelf purged our Sins, ſat down on the right Hand of the Majeſty on high, far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name*

that is named, not only in this World, but in that which is to come. Heb. 1. 2, 3. Eheſ. 1. 21. thus exalting him not only above all Earthly Principalities and Potentates, but the higheſt Order of Celeſtial Spirits.

Chriſt in his Glory deſpiſes not the communion of his Saints.

But though Chriſt be never ſo much exalted, he deſpiſes not the meaneſt of his Saints, nor refuſes Communion with them; for he was in the *Form of God*, Phil. 2. 7. when he took upon him the form of a Servant to free us, and he who ſo far condeſcended to bring us to Heaven, he will receive us kindly, when we come there. Whilſt he was in the Fleſh, he owned *Lazarus* even in the Grave, and notwithſtanding his deſpicable condition, called him his Friend. And when he deſcended from the Mount of Olives, notwithſtanding the Acclamations of the People, and the Palms and Veſtments ſpread in his way, and their Praiſes, he was not forgetful of, nor could not forbear, deploring the Fate of *Jeruſalem*, *Luk.* 19. 37, 38. —— 41. nor in the midſt of his Triumphs did he forget to expreſs a Concern for the worſt of his Enemies. And that it might not be thought, that he took compaſſion on ſuch poor Creatures, becauſe he ſhared of their ſufferings after his Reſurrection, when the Ingratitude of his Apoſtles, who deſerted him, was freſh upon him, notwithſtanding the change of his Condition, he ſcrupled not to give thoſe that forſook him, *Mat.* 28. 10. The Glorious Title of *Brethren*, *Mar.* 16. 7. and was concerned for *Peter*, that denyed him. When in Heaven he remembred his Diſtreſſed Members on Earth, and took notice of *Stephen*, when expiring, *Acts* 7. and

when

when *Saul* was perſecuting Chriſtians, he cryed out, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me, Acts* 9. 4. as if he were one with thoſe that Love him. And in his Meſſages to the ſeven Churches in the *Apocalipſe*, he makes it evident, that he hath a particular regard to ſingle Perſons, his greatneſs not diminiſhing his kindneſs, but making it more obliging; and after his Aſcenſion he thought not much to ſay, *Behold! I ſtand at the Door and knock, if any Man hear my voice, and open the Door, I will come in to him, and will ſup with him, and he with me. Rev.* 3. 20. And as King in the Parable, he welcomes each truſty vigilant Servant *Euge, bene ſerve, Mat.* 25. And in another Parable, he promiſes to reward his faithful Servants, telling his Diſciples. *Bleſſed are thoſe Servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo watching, Verily I ſay unto you, that he ſhall gird himſelf, and make them to ſet down to meat, and will come forth to ſerve them, Luk* 12. 37. And though this is to be taken, not in a ſtrict, but a Hyperbolical Senſe, yet we find, that our Saviour did not think much to converſe with *Publicans* and *Sinners*, nor to waſh the Feet of his Diſciples; and if he was ſo familiar with thoſe that were apt to turn the favour of God into Wantonneſs, we need not doubt his gracious Condeſcention to thoſe pious Perſons, who will receive what he vouchſafes with Joy and Gratitude.

Wonder not that I uſe ſuch Expreſſions, to repreſent the brightneſs of that Son of Righteouſneſs, who ſhines with unequal Splendour, ſince we ſhall *ſee Jeſus, who was made little lower than the Angels, for the ſuffering of Death, crowned with Glory and Honour, Heb.* 2. 9. Heaven

will be more acceptable, when we ſee him there, who hath ſuffered ſo much for us; for as our Love, as well as other Graces, will be perfected in Heaven, our Redeemers Happineſs muſt needs make an addition to ours, according to the degrees of our Love for him, his Happineſs conferring proportional degrees on us; and that which will endear Heaven more to us, will be that we enjoy it upon his account. Any trifle that is preſented by a Miſtreſs, is highly valued by a Lover, and more than the richeſt Preſent of Nature or Fortune. How great a Bleſſing then muſt it be to owe Happineſs, to one whoſe Love will make it a greater Felicity, than Heaven it ſelf could be as only an act of Divine Bounty. As Brides value their wedding Ring more as a Pledg of Love, than as Gold. The perſecuted Apoſtles *rejoyced to have been counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his Name*, *Acts* 5. 41. And if to ſuffer for him, was the occaſion of ſo much joy, how much more muſt it be to reign with him. He having born the Hardſhips and Afflictions our frail Nature is ſubject to, does not a little ſupport us under them, and eaſe us, *ſince the Chaſtiſement of our Peace was upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed*, *Iſa.* 53. 5. and he that relieved us by his Croſs, will do more when he ſhall invite each faithful Servant *to enter into his Maſters Joy*, *Mat.* 25. 21. Thus Chriſt in all his Capacities and Conditions contributed ſo much to our Happineſs, that both in Heaven and Earth, he made it his buſineſs to ſhare our Grief, and make us partake of his Joys, either leſſening ours by his Sufferings, or encreaſing our Felicity by his own.

Thus

Thus much being ſaid of the Happineſs of Chriſt in Heaven, and that which thoſe that love him enjoy there, I ſhall proceed to tell you, that in Heaven we ſhall not only enjoy the ſight of Chriſt, but of our Friends and Relations, who lived in his Fear, and dyed in his Favour; for our Saviour tells us, that *the Children of the Reſurrection, ſhall be equal to the Angels*, *Luke* 20. 36. who in the Viſion of *Daniel* and St. *John* ſeem acquainted with one another; for in the Parable of the miſerable Epicure, and the happy Beggar, *Luke* 16. the Father of the Faithful is repreſented as knowing both the Perſon and Condition of *Lazarus*, and the Apoſtle expects his pious *Theſſalonians* to be *his Crown* at *that great Day*, 1 Theſ. 2. 19, 20. when *having turned many to Righteouſneſs*, they ſhall confer a Starlike and Immortal Brightneſs, *Dan.* 2. Since the Knowledg of Actions and Perſons are requiſite to the great end of the Day of Judgment, which is the manifeſtation of his Juſtice, in Rewards and Puniſhments, from hence we may conclude, that we ſhall know one another in a place where nothing will be wanting to make us happy, and conſequently we ſhall not want the ſatisfaction of knowing our ſelves happy, or our Friends. Nor is it improbable our Friends that know us, will welcom us thither, for ſince the Angels rejoyce at the converſion of a Sinner, *Luke* 15. 7. it is not abſurd to think, that where Charity grows perfect, *Cor.* 13. that our Friends ſhould rejoyce at our turning to God, and much more at our coming home to him, having eſcaped the Dangers and Hazards, and paſſed ſafe through the hardſhips of this troubleſom World; with thoſe we have here mourned

The Knowledg of each others Happineſs an Addition to our own.

mourned we ſhall then rejoyce. And if the diſcovery of each others Vertues, would not give us the Knowledg of their Perſons, we could never know our Friends, for thoſe who looked ſo ghaſtly and disfigured at their departure out of this World, will be aſſiſting about the Throne of Chriſt, *their vile Bodies being transfigured into the likeneſs of his glorious Body*, *Phil.* 3. 21. mixing their *Hallelujahs* with the moſt dignifyed Favourites of Heaven. Nor will *Jacobs* meeting with *Joſeph*, who was ſo long thought dead and loſt, be ſo much tranſporting. And as the Patriarch ſaid to his Son, *now let me dye, ſince I have ſeen thy Face*, *Gen.* 46. 30. when we ſee our Friends in Heaven we ſhall be ſure to live with them there. Here indeed, if ill Actions or Sufferings do not moderate our Love, we are apt to doat on our Friends, and to provoke God to take them early out of the way; but there compleated Graces both deſerve and allow the higheſt ſtrains of Friendſhip; the contemplation of the Infinite Perfections of God, confining all Love to the Creatures to a ſubordinate degree to that Love, which we owe to the Creator, as being grounded on it.

The Myſteries of Religion more clearly apprehended in a Future State.

There perhaps we may underſtand thoſe Myſteries of Religion, which here the profoundeſt Divines cannot comprehend; being obliged to acknowledg that Depth they cannot fathom, *Rom.* 11. 33. there we ſhall underſtand the obſcure paſſages of Scripture, & how the ſeveral parts of it are adapted to Times, Perſons and Occurrences, and be able to reconcile them, and apprehend their Harmony, as well as the Reaſon why they were wrote obſcurely. The Style of the Scripture will alſo appear rational and admirable

ble as well as worthy it's Omniſcient Author. The Reaſon then of his Conduct in the Government of the World will be evident, and why Calamities and Perſecutions afflict Vertue and Innocence, and Proſperity is heaped on their Criminal Oppoſers. We ſhall then be convinced why the ſeeming Irregularities, the Heathens imputed to a blind Deity, are conſiſtent with God's Juſtice and Goodneſs; and though that Belief ſeems a greater ſelf-denial, than abſtaining from Wine, Gold, or Miſtreſſes, in Heaven it will appear reaſonable, as it is here difficult, as *Bildad* ſays to *Job*, *we are but of Yeſterday, and know nothing, becauſe our Days upon Earth are but a Shadow*, *Job*. 8. 9. and as our ſhort Lives, give us ſo ſmall a view of the Actions of the World, no wonder we underſtand not a Play, or the Plot, ſince we ſee neither the beginning nor the end of it. But in the other World, when the whole deſigns ſhall be diſcloſed, the Revolutions of Empires, States, *&c.* will appear juſt, requiſite and ſeaſonable; and what here tempted us to deny, will oblige us to praiſe God. The Reaſon of his diſpenſations will raiſe wonder and gratitude, and thoſe afflictions which ſeemed ſevere will appear merciful; their hopes being diſappointed, to ſecure better things & their Inferior Intereſt only diſappointed to advantage ſuperior ones. Our Underſtandings will be enlightned, & the Difficulties which exerciſed our Faith, will be manifeſted as a reward; which will be both Noble and Pretious, the abſtruſe Myſteries of Divinity and Providence, both gratifying and enriching our Underſtanding.

We

Our Converſations with Saints and Angels, &c.

We ſhall there converſe with Saints and Angels, and even God himſelf, and *ſee him as he is, all in all*, eminently compriſing all the goods we value in his Creatures, 1 *John.* 3. 2. 1 *Cor.* 15. 8.

Anaxagoras told the Man that asked him, what he was born for, it was to contemplate the Sun; and the moſt our dim Intellects know of things, is but a ſmall part of that Wiſdom, Power and Goodneſs, expreſſed in the Creation; yet we cannot but admire his viſible Perfections evident in his Works. That wiſe Queen who viſited *Solomon* was raviſhed at the decent order of his Management, and the *Angels themſelves deſire to look into the Myſteries of God*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. How great a happineſs will it then be, to ſee what Heaven will diſcover to us; eſpecially, ſince *we ſhall be like God*, and *ſeeing him as he is*, 1 *John* 3. 2. Our Saviour ſays, *Bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God*, *Mat.* 5. 8. And the Apoſtle exhorting the *Hebrews* to *follow Peace and Holineſs*, adds, to deter them from ſlighting it, *without which no Man ſhall ſee the Lord*, Heb. 12. 14. And our Saviour forbidding the Scandalizing of the little ones, ſays, *their Angels do always ſee the Face of his Father which is in Heaven*, Mat. 18. 10. The Contemplation of that Glorious Object will divert us from other pleaſures except what it ſelf affords; and ſhall deſire nothing more, than a Capacity to ſing more praiſes, the conceiving of which deſires, will be accepted, as an Accompliſhment. Time then, like fire, conſuming what it can light on, ſhall end in Eternity; and our Joys, tho' long enjoyed, will ſtill be new, being equally diſtant from a Period, nor ſhall we ever be weary of them, there being no Imperfection either in the object or appetite. If there be any variety, it will be a further Knowledg of the firſt Object, like the change of Colours, when Doves move their necks, or the Diverſifyed refractions of ſparkling Diamonds. There is in God a various Identity, which both ſatisfyes and creates

creates deſire, other delights like Cloaths, grow old and ſtale, but thoſe of Heaven, like the *Jews*'s Garments in the Wilderneſs, *Deut.* 29. 5. will be never the worſe for being long uſed. And that which will add to our Happineſs will be, that our Joys ſhall be Eternal, being without Interruption employed in Celebrating God's Praiſes. In a Word, our Joys will be ſo immenſe, that Eternity will only give us a full taſte of them.

The Multitude of the happy diminiſhes not their Happineſs.

From hence it appears, that the Celeſtial *Canaan is a Land flowing with Milk and Honey, being the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, *Col.* 1. 12. And ſince to be in Heaven, is the only way to know how happy we ſhall be there, and the Scripture hath revealed ſomething of Paradiſe, only to quicken our Obedience, to what I have ſaid of it, I ſhall only add this Property of our future Bliſs. That the Multitude of Partners detracts not from the Felicity of each, nor is the Propriety leſs for it's being Publick. The Number of Finites cannot exhauſt an Infinite, nor have we leſs Light of the Sun, becauſe our Neighbours enjoy it. And tho' the Sun by it's Light obſcures the Planets; yet the Son of Righteouſneſs will impart his Splendor to his Saints; *for when Chriſt who is our Life ſhall appear, then ſhall we alſo appear with him in Glory*,, Col. 3. 4. the Elect being not like Stars, which loſe their Luſtre, but poliſhed Silver or Braſs, which ſhine the moſt, when moſt ſhined upon. *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine*, ſays every Saint to his Redeemer, *Cant.* 6. 3. and *David* ſays of them that truſt in God, *That he ſhall abundantly ſatisfy them with the fulneſs of his Houſe, and make them drink of the River of his Pleaſures*, Pſalm 38. 6. So that we enjoy all that God's Immenſity will allow of. The Angels, tho' of a Superior Nature and above Perſonal Sufferings, ſympathize with us, ſince they rejoyce at the Converſion of a ſinner, and though diſtant in place are as *one Family in Heaven and Earth*, Epheſ. 3. 15. If then the Diſparity

parity of Reſidence, Qualities, and Conditions, hinders not the Lovers of God, from Loving one another, it muſt need encreaſe as it grows more perfect, and hath other Graces to cheriſh and encreaſe it. The Apoſtle tells us of the ſtrict Union betwixt Chriſt and his Saints, and the Saints themſelves tell us, that *he is the Head, and they are his Body and Members in particular*, 1 Cor. 12. ſo that, *if one Member ſuffers, all the Members ſuffer with it, and if one Member be honoured, all the Members rejoyce with it*. v. 27, 28. In that bleſſed ſtate our Will, will be conformed to our Makers, & each Saint and Angel with his own Love will enjoy a proportionate Degree of ours. And then as perfect Friendſhip appropriates both Croſſes and Proſperities, (as *Barzillai* could not be more obliged by *David*, than by the Kings kindneſs to his Son) 2 *Sam* 19. 37. each Beatitude in Heaven ſhall be ours, our Union with our Head, and Communion with each other making us partakers of their Felicity.

The Concluſion. To conclude, our Love to the Creatures is an Earneſt, but to God is a Title: The One makes us the Objects, and the other, the Objects Ours. And ſince there is ſuch ſtrange Magick in Love, as to transform the love into the Object loved, we ought to be careful in Dedicating a Paſſion, which muſt either Dignify or Degrade our Nature; & not to addreſs the higheſt Intenſity of our Love to any Inferior Object, to which we cannot ſtoop without degrading our ſelves.

CHAP. III.

Containing an Occaſional Reflection on a Letter, giving an account of what paſſed on the Kings Coronation-day, in a little Country Town.

The Subject. THE Writer of this Letter, no doubt, thinks, that in what he hath ſaid of the King, and what he hath done to ſolemnize the Day, he hath behaved

ved himſelf very well. His way of writing ſhews he is well pleaſed with his Performance, and expects Thanks from the King, or to be mentioned in the News Papers. But he is not alone of that Mind; for being his Landlords Bailiff, he is eſteemed throughout the Pariſh, and hath a right to pity thoſe that do not admire him. Yet we, who are unconcerned, can diſcover both his ill contrived Encomiums, and his way of honouring his Prince; a great deal that might be mended, and a great deal that may be laughed at. So that if the King caſts a gracious Smile on them, it muſt be for the unſuitableneſs of the Performance, the hearty, tho' ill expreſſed Loyalty and Love, and as a Subject of Merriment. And not only thoſe bred at Court, but were he himſelf to reſide there, and to be acquainted with what might be fit to ſhew a high Veneration for a great Perſon and a great Prince, he would in time diſtinguiſh betwixt what he hath done, and what a Perſon better bred might have done, and would bluſh at what he now Triumphs in.

The Reflection.

This hath often made me think, what Thoughts the Angels may have of our Praiſes & Deſcription of God for which we are applauded by others as well as our ſelves; Theſe heavenly Inhabitants having advantages in Celebrating their Maker, which we want; for being free from inordinate Affections, they can better diſcern the Excellences of God's Attributes. Nor can their Sins hinder them from diſcerning his Juſtice, nor can Ingratitude oppoſe his Goodneſs, nor are they afraid of diſcerning & adoring his Wiſdom, leſt they ſhould be blam'd for repining at his diſpenſations; beſides their Longævity gives them a fuller proſpect of the Contrivances and Management of the Affairs of this World. *They ſtand before God, and continually ſee his Face*, Luk. 1. Mat. 18. and conſequently, can contemplate and ſerve many Excellences, which Experience could only give them Thoughts of; beſides they ſee ways of honouring him, above what we can aim at, and conſequently, their Homages muſt be of a Nobler kind than Ours. And as grown Perſons have riper notions than ours, and thoſe may be improved by Arts and Sciences, thoſe Angels who have a nearer acceſs to contemplate his Perfections, and whoſe Intellects have greater Capacities, muſt have different Conceptions of

of Divine Attributes from what our ſhallow and dim ſight can diſcover, ſo that their Notions and Expreſſions muſt far exceed ours; and tho' their Goodneſs will not let them contemn ours; yet they look upon our Imperfections, as we ſhould our ſelves, when admitted into their Society, eſteeming them as Learned Men do, what they did when School-Boys. To Praiſe God is a Debt, which will continue as long as the Obligations, and can never be paid for want of Coin of juſt value. Indeed ſome Men ſay more than others, but none enough on a a Subject, *the Spirits of Juſt Men made perfect*, cannot Celebrate, *Heb.* 10. perhaps we may think, that becauſe our Praiſes exceed any other ſubject, they are Worthy of God; but our Expreſſions at the beſt can but expreſs our Conceptions, which being Notions of finite Creatures cannot reach what is infinite. And tho' inflamed by that *inacceſſible Light* inhabited, by him we adore, 1 *Tim.* 6 16. yet our Expreſſions extend no further than our Devotion, declaring how much we honour him, not what he is, which none but an Infinite Intellect can do.

But let not this Impotence diſcourage us. Thoſe bleſſed Souls *that follow the Lamb where ever he goes*, continually celebrate his praiſes, which we ought to imitate, though we cannot equal it, God's acceptance, excuſing our Impotence. For *where there is a willing Mind, a Man is accepted, according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not*, 2 *Cor.* 8. 12. To Conclude, ſince God is ſo *glorious, that he is exalted above all Bleſſings and Praiſe*, *Neh.* 9. 5. and tho' *We could ſpeak with the Tongue of Men and Angels*, 1 *Cor.* 13. 1. yet they muſt come ſhort of his Perfections. And ſince God ſays, *whoſo offereth Praiſe Glorifyes me*, *Pſal.* 50. 23, I ſhall not neglect that Duty, who, tho' he deſerves infinitely more than I can ſay, will not refuſe what I can offer. Yet when *I fill my Mouth with his Praiſes*, I muſt acknowledg my Expreſſions far ſhort of the Excellency of the Subject.

FINIS.